



Qualitative Study

Uncovering Social Norms about the Value of Domestic Care Works and Women's Participation in Stereotypical Work and the Labor Market

Results of a study conducted in the West Bank and Gaza Strip



August 2021

Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development (PWWSD)



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Published by the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development

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This material is completely financed by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida),
International Labor Organization (ILO) and UN Women

Opinions and views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the funding Organizations



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1. Introduction

For centuries and decades, it has prevailed that the social distinctions between women and men are natural and do not change and that they are determined by biological differences. These distinctions and characteristics included ideas and values related to males and females and a set of stereotypes, attitudes and behaviors of men and women. This analytical report seeks to reveal these stereotypes and societal discriminatory rules on basis of gender with regard to the roles of women and men, in order to free minds, ideas and behaviors from these pre-conceived judgments and stereotypes stuck in the minds about the work and roles of men and women in society. Also to show that these differences between men and women are culturally, ideologically and socially based and not an inevitable biological result. Therefore, it became necessary to distinguish between the natural, the cultural and the ideological in relations between men and women at the labor level.

The fact that men's participation in the labor market is higher than women's participation is a global phenomenon. Despite the development that has been taking place on reducing gender gap in labor market in Palestine, a gap still exists. When linking between division of roles in society and the daily working hours for both men and women, we can understand one of the reasons for the low rate of women's participation in the labor market. Thus, providing time and opportunities for women will contribute to supporting them in the labor market. In other words, reducing the hours of unpaid domestic care work of women and having this work equally shared with men will increase women participation rate in labor market.

Despite the importance of care work for the family and society, it is not considered an economic activity, that is, it is not a real work. In reality, it is not calculated in the national accounts. A United Nations report showed that more than 51% of the work done by women is unpaid, and is not calculated in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and other statistics¹. The list of unpaid work includes work in house farms, business, household chores and care giving. Governments and societies still do not recognize this as real work. Therefore, they are not paid, for example, home maintenance and raising children is still a woman's specialty, not a man's. Therefore, a large part of women's work remains unrecognized socially up to this date. However, we can pose the following questions: Why do women do unpaid care work disproportionately with men? Why are women restricted to work in traditional occupations in the labor market, and they are discriminated against?

Literature reviews indicated that social norms play a remarkable role in defining gender roles and thus the use of time between men and women. Accordingly, discrimination against women in the labor market is systematic and thus, they cannot work in all occupations. They are restricted to stereotypical occupations such as education and secretarial work. Moreover, women's participation in occupations that are not stereotypical or unfamiliar to the surroundings (such as blacksmithing, carpentry, and driving Taxi, ambulance, or bulldozers, etc.), or some works of art that are not prevalent in society or other works are usually faced with disapproval from society. Gender equality in the Palestinian society is not only a social issue, but also an economic reality, as women suffer from wage gaps compared to men doing the same work. Furthermore the

¹ UN: Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development, "Report on the World Social Situation 2016 Executive Summary". <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/2016/RWSS2016ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

unemployment rate among women is higher than that among males. For that reason, this report seeks to shed light on the discriminatory restrictions and social stereotypes on unpaid home care work, done by women in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the reality of women working in non-stereotypical occupations in the labor market as an essential step to break these restrictions and change the stereotypes.

This study is one of the basic outputs of the regional project “**Breaking Discriminatory Restrictions to Support Women’s Participation in Economy**” implemented by PWWSO in partnership with the Education for Employment - Palestine (EFE-Palestine) and the Women's Action Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Women (AOWA) during the period between August 2020 to August 2022. This project is implemented within the framework of the regional program “**Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women**”, which is being implemented in Egypt, Palestine and Jordan. The program is implemented in partnership between UN Women and the International Labor Organization (ILO), and funded by the Sweden Government and SIDA. **This program aims** to engage the community, government and private sector in order to enhance the value of women's work and equal and collective participation in unpaid domestic work and care. It also aims to encourage women to enter all the different occupations provided that they are decent and to eliminate horizontal and vertical occupational segregation and that participation in this work is linked to the basics of decent work.

2. Executive Summary

To collect information, this study relied on literature review, holding 27 workshops in which 399 students (309 females and 90 males) have participated in addition to 31 academicians (21 females and 10 males) from 11 universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to holding 12 focus groups sessions attended by 132 participants (85 women and 47 men) from the community leaders from both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the first place, it is clear from the research that the traditional societal division of roles of both sexes is based on a biological basis, although the differences in mentality between the sexes are minimal, and the similarities in ideas between them are more. Nevertheless, these differences have been amplified and expanded by the society and patterns and images about the roles and behaviors of both sexes were built on them, which have led to inequality and discrimination between the sexes in the household and in the labor market. Men, by virtue of their biological makeup, are superior to women, and this is reinforced by the role assigned to them in the family. From the structural aspect, the woman's body is also viewed as weak compared to the man's. On this basis, occupations in the labor market have been separated on the basis of gender. Accordingly, women cannot do hard work as men, and their feminine nature is linked to the emotional side, which means that women are linked to the task of raising children.

Participants considered domestic care works as real, and that these jobs are entrusted to women while men often do not perform unpaid work, given that they are the breadwinners of families. In return for the man's support to the woman, the woman does not receive a direct wage for domestic and care work. This home care work is considered one of the main reasons for women's low participation in the labor market and their access to paid employment opportunities. Also, these works are not included within the definition of labor or the Labor Law or within the national accounts given that it is not a real job as other jobs in the labor market, despite its importance to the family in particular, and society and the economic structure in general.

The results also indicated that husbands often do not share their wives in the domestic and care works and in case they do, it is considered an exception rather than the rule. In the labor market, women are exploited by employers on basis that women are not the main family breadwinner. Therefore, they are given less wage than men and not only this but they are also paid less than the minimum wages. Women are often forced to work with wages less than men's wages. Some participants (males and females) pointed out that in some cases women's femininity is exploited by employers to attract more customers and increase marketing.

Many factors play in reproducing division of roles between men and women in the society, most important of which are: the unenlightened religious discourse (patriarchal), socialization/social upbringing that distinguishes between the sexes in roles and rights, and the patriarchal societal culture. Moreover, many factors worked on empowering women to involve in non-stereotypical occupations, including the war on Gaza, which contributed to women's involvement in the press profession, the economic situation also pushed women to work as waitresses in restaurants, Corona epidemic also encouraged women to work in business from their homes using the social media in marketing their products and etc.

3. Methodology

The methodology for preparing the research relied on collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information within the following steps:

1. Documents and literature related to the research topic, surveys and official data of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, research studies, policy papers, laws, reports, and outcomes of political sessions, were collected and reviewed via zoom technology...etc., in order to monitor and analyze gender gaps, and the backgrounds behind the production of these gaps, and societal stereotypes of the roles of both sexes in society.
2. The study tool was developed in cooperation with the PWWSD staff, to be used as a tool for discussion in groups and workshops. The tool is a short story called (Hands of Time). The story is related to the roles of both sexes in society. The story was presented at the beginning of the meetings, and then a discussion took place about the role of men and women in home care work, and in the labor market, especially women's work in non-traditional occupations.
3. PWWSD organized and coordinated with universities and women organizations in Palestine. In this regard, 27 dialogue sessions were implemented with students and academicians (males and females) in 11 universities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip distributed as follows:

Eight universities in the West Bank: Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron, the Palestinian Technical University (Khadoury) in Tulkarm, the College of Arroub, Bethlehem University, Birzeit University, An-Najah National University in Nablus, the Arab American University in Jenin, Al-Quds Open University in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Three universities in Gaza Strip: Al-Quds Open University, Al-Azhar University and the University College for Applied Sciences.

Furthermore, 12 focus groups were implemented in which activists (males and females) in the field of human rights, civil society organizations, community leaders and activists in the fields of press, journalism and arts participated: Gaza Strip and five cities in the West Bank (Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarem).

4. A total of 39 dialogue meetings were held in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with university students, activists and workers in the fields of human rights, culture, media and press, women's rights, university professors, community leaders, lawyers, and in other fields through holding focus groups and workshops via Zoom. The number of workshops reached (27). The total number of participants in the workshops in Palestine amounted to 393 in Palestine, thereof 305 females and 88 males, while participation distribution on geographical basis was 247 participants in the West Bank (204 females compared to 47 males). In Gaza Strip, the total number of participants amounted to 146 (101 females compared to 47 males). This is in addition to holding 12 focus groups in which 200 activists participated in the work groups, thereof 149 females and 51 males. Distribution of participants on geographical basis was 134 participants in the West Bank (90 females and 44 males), whereas the total number of participants in these groups was 66 (59 females and 7 males).

5. The potential pioneers of change (Champions) were identified and selected from among the participants in the workshops and focus groups, based on specific criteria, including their knowledge of the topics of discussion, their personal opinions and attitudes about the research topics, and their attitudes towards societal stereotypes that appeared on the roles of both sexes in the society. The total number of Champions (males and females) in the workshops in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was 122, thereof 27 males and 96 females. In the West Bank, the number of Champions in the workshops was 32 (23 females and 10 males) compared to 90 Champions (73 females and 17 males) in Gaza Strip.
6. At the level of focus groups, the total number of Champions (males and females) was 73 in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip (74 females and 26 males). In the West Bank, the total number of Champions amounted to 50 (30 females and 20 males), while in Gaza Strip the total number of Champions was 23 (17 females and 6 males).
7. Uploading and analyzing information and data collected through the outputs of workshops and focus groups and drafting a report that also included strategies of change in order to give value to unpaid work and support women's orientation to work in the non-stereotypical labor market.

4. Concepts and Terminology

A. Sex concept

The concept of sex refers to the biological and physiological features of being male or female (ie, external and internal genitalia, hormones and other sexual characteristics...). Together, these conditions define sex in terms of masculinity and femininity.

B. Gender Concept

The United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) {now UN Women} defined the concept of gender as “the socially defined roles for both males and females, and these roles that are calculated by education change over time and vary widely within one culture and from one culture to another. Gender refers to femininity and masculinity, men and women are treated unequally on the basis of their sex, the differences between males and females are often referred to as the basis for unequal treatment, and these gender differences have been exploited to build social norms and stereotypes, with regard to the division of labor, distribution of power, responsibilities and rights between men and women, and the basis for differentiation continues to be traced back to the biological difference, it means the image that society views on us as women and men, and the way it expects us to think/ behave, and this is due to the way society is organized, and not to the biological (sexual) differences between men and women, as is clear from the definition of the concept of gender. The different roles (rights, duties, and obligations), relationships, responsibilities, images, and status of women and men, which are socially defined and documented throughout the historical development of a society, are all subject to change.”²

In other words, gender is a social structure of ideas that define the roles, attitudes, expectations, values and images of men and women, or about masculinity and femininity in a particular society, and it contributes significantly to power relations. These differences are the result of religious, economic, political and social factors. We are raised through the process of socialization and its institutions, starting with the family, passing through the educational institution, the media, and the various institutions of society, and so we grow up and become men or women, where we learn our roles how to comply with femininity as women, and how to comply with masculinity as men. Through this definition, what is expected of a man in an environment, culture, education and knowledge varies from place to place and from time to time, and the same is true for women. In some peoples, the man pays the dowry, in other peoples, the woman pays the dowry and in other peoples men and women share the dowry. Tawareq men are expected to cover the face, while in other places women are expected to do that.

C. Gender Roles

Literature reviews indicate that gender roles are “the roles, behaviors, activities and traits that the society perceives as suitable for men or women”. Through this definition, it may be said that the gender roles are socially established, which means that they are not built on biological basis. We may also understand the social roles of a certain kind through

² <https://gender.jhpiego.org/analysistoolkit/gender-concepts-and-definitions/>

classification followed by society. Men and women play many roles in the society, ranging from the reproductive and productive role to the political role, but women have three roles: **the reproductive role**, which is described as an unpaid role and not calculated in the formal economy. This role reduces women chances to participate in the formal economy and decreases their capability to seize opportunities available in the labor market. **The productive role** in the formal or informal sector is often with a paid wage. Nevertheless, this wage is disproportionate with the size of work done in comparison with men's wage. On the second hand, men and women play a **political role** in the society but women's role in this field is weak compared to men's. These roles (such as responsibilities, tasks, activities and behaviors) were defined and drawn on the basis of the biological differences between men and women, and then imposed on them by the society.

Spence also noted that gender roles refer to "normative expectations about the division of labor between the sexes, and gender-related norms about social interactions that exist in a particular cultural-historical context" (Spence et al., 1985, p. 150)³.

D. Gender Identity

It can be said that a person is born male or female, and is not born a woman or a man, because gender identity is not by birth. According to Lisa M. Diamonds, gender identity is not a fixed and stable trait but it is socially constructed and may vary over time. A study conducted by Bandora and Bosi that children want to be like others of their sex. Social conformity of adolescents has been extensively studied. The results showed that 6-year-old children tended to comply with choices that their peers found most popular. Children begin to label things as for "girls" or for "boys" and conform to what is expected of them. West and Zimmerman states that the concept of femininity is realized through an active process of gender creation through an active process to create gender by interacting with others in a certain social context⁴. Therefore, it can be said that a woman is not born a woman, but she becomes a woman and man is not born a man but he becomes a man.

E. Social Norms⁵

Several different definitions of social norms emphasize the importance of shared expectations or informal rules among a group of persons, regarding people behavior or those which govern their conduct and these norms are maintained by the society. Literature also indicates that gender norms are social principles and procedures that govern the behavior of girls, boys, women and men in society and restrict their sexual identity to what is considered appropriate. Gender norms are not fixed or universal and change over time. For instance, it is more likely that "household chores" to be done by girls than boys. Data of time survey in Palestine 2012-2013 showed that there is a real

³ International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2001

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes>

⁴ <https://www.wikizero.com/ar/>

⁵ Gender Social Construction

gap between women and men of different age groups, in the percentage of time each of them spend on unpaid household chores. This gap is deeply clarified in various age groups, which indicates that housework and childcare are among the daily tasks of women and it strengthens domestic roles towards women and not men, as women in the age group (25-44 years) spend 27.2% of the daily time in domestic work activities compared to 3.4% for men of the same age group.

F. Stereotypes/ Fixed Patterns⁶

It is a concept that belongs to social psychology and associated with an array of generalizations or preconceptions, sometimes exaggerated, about a person or group of people governed by stability and inactivity, so it is difficult to modify or change them even if there are evidence and proofs of their invalidity. Usually, fixed patterns are analyzed as part of social relations, and negative rigid patterns of the characteristics or traits of a particular group are considered an important part in the formation of the various patterns of discrimination on the basis of gender (male / female). For example, the exercise of power is seen as a masculine behavior. In most cultures, the man is assumed to be the leader of the family and society, while the woman is seen as a follower, supportive, obedient, good listener, polite and soft. Negativity and acceptance of injustice may be seen as signs of femininity.

⁶https://genderiyya.xyz/wiki/%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A9_%D9%86%D9%85%D8%B7%D9%8A%D8%A9_%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9

5. Local and International Literature Review

Gender Roles in the Palestinian Context

Gender concept is based on that the division of roles between men and women is built on social and not biological norms. This means that societies identify the expected roles of men and women. For example, traditionally, societies assigned to women specific roles and professions that are not usually assigned to men, such as taking care of children and household affairs. Nevertheless, different societies have gone too far in using their right to define these roles, so they have oppressed and chained women, forcing them to confine themselves within the borders of the dwarfed routine roles that they established for them.

Literature indicated that a person is born as a biological being, and it is the social and cultural systems and patterns that transform him/her into what he is or she is. In other words, he is born male or female, and social upbringing and education are what transforms him into a woman or a man and our perception of gender identity, attitudes, representations, perceptions, interactions and relationships. Gender identity, a man and a woman, is not born with the human being, but rather it is something that we contribute to making and developing during our daily lives through our social interaction with others. But the question is to what extent can the biological characteristics that we are born with affect or control our personality as a gender (woman and man).

Anthony Giddens pointed out that differences between men and women are not necessarily derived from biological differences between males and females. Rather, they are differences that are basically translated from the society's and civilization's view of gender, and on the expectations that society itself builds about gender roles and behaviors. This means that the society's view and expectations of gender in it build and design stages of development of male as a man and female as a woman and they themselves design the class and society on basis of superiority in favor of men over women, because gender differences are closely linked to issues related to disparities, inequality and power in society⁷.

Melissa Haynes considers that behavioral and sexual differences are the product of complex interactions between a number of different influences, some of which are biological and others social, but she finally concludes that the distinction between biological and social influences is somewhat false, and says in this context, "All our behavior is governed by our brains, and in this sense, it is biologically based⁸."

It is clear, then, that those who support this approach consider that the biological body composition of humans (such as hormones, chromosomes, brain size and genetic influences) are responsible for innate differences in the behavior of men and women⁹. They believe that it is possible to observe these differences in the various cultures, which means that there are natural factors that lead to inequality between men and women in almost all societies. Therefore, it is clear that scholars of this context consider that differences between men and women are genetically determined.

⁷ Anthony Giddens, "Sociology" Translated and presented by: Dr. Fayez Al-Sayagh, Fourth Edition, 2005, p. 186.

⁸ Melissa Haynes, "The Brain Gender" 2008, p. 23

⁹ Anthony Giddens, *Ibid*, p. 187

It can be said that the positions of men and women in society are not a biological product or have to do with natural differences, but rather are social constructions that are mainly related to social upbringing and cultural factors. In this context, we can point out to the talk about sex or social division of work between sexes. This division does not translate integration between tasks as much as it translates the power that is exercised between sexes and all kinds of oppression, exclusion and marginalization of which women suffer within the society, as it includes a certain kind of priority between men and the production cycle, while it confines women in the reproduction cycle. **This evident through the two principles of this division: the principle of separation, where there are works specific to men and others specific to women, and the principle of hierarchy, where we find that the works of men have more value than the work of women. This paradox exists in most societies to the extent that these two principles seem natural and valid for all societies. This ideology that indicates to the matter as common sense, the historical reality and anthropological research prove the opposite and clarify that sex division of work is not stable, static or natural because work division between sexes changes according to time and place, historical facts and studies.**

Anthropological and sociological researches conducted by Margret Read showed that gender is a cultural construction. Mead's most important research in this field is the one that led her to Oceania, where she got to know three societies in New Guinea: the Arabash society, the Mongomore society, and the Shambuli society (1935). Mead concluded that the individual personality cannot be explained by its biological traits but by the cultural model of society that identifies the upbringing of child since the first moments of his life¹⁰.

The way in which the mind is sexualized and the body constructed is different. If the male, as Bourdieu recognizes, is expelled from the female world “the home” since his childhood and integrated in the male world “the market”, “the coffee shop” or “freedom to roam throughout the city quarters”, the female, since her childhood, is obligated not to go beyond the home threshold. Thus, due to the union of all these mental- social images, the human being cultural product is formed, which is characterized by a pattern of way of life, or that the woman is a lazy or negative being – carrying a cultural treasure¹¹. Bourdieu pointed out that the mental social images are cultural and not natural¹².

A study conducted in Palestine on education from gender perspective (2015) showed that the number of activities carried out by mother inside home, according to the civil and national education books for the four classes, is more than the activities done by the husband. In the four books, the mother’s activities are (3) compared to one activity for man. In the same four books, women’s activities outside home are (6), compared to (12) activities for man. This means that men are superior to women in the number of activities they do outside the home. The study also showed that women's activities are concentrated in professions of (teacher, nurse, doctor, school principal) while men’s activities concentrated in (teacher, doctor, engineer, merchant, mechanic,

¹⁰ Rouqaiia Likbir and Ousama Buhairi. "The Sociology of Gender: Moroccan Bodies as a Model", 17-8-2020.

<https://couua.com/2020/08/17>

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu. “The Masculine Domination”, 1998, p. 47

¹² Pierre Bourdieu. “The Masculine Domination”, 1998, p. 73

baker, school principal, camp director, etc). This shows the role of educational curricula in reproducing the stereotypical roles of men and women in society¹³.

A study for the stereotypes of women in media (2015) also indicated that the economic contributions of women are the last thing covered by the Palestinian media, while the most covered are the social contributions. It also showed that the media is still going very slowly in breaking some social barriers and taboos. Despite the widening circle and number of women's rights violations in various fields, it is not appropriately reflected in media. And that the media discourse in terms of intensive expression of the societal culture, which presents a specific stereotype of both women and men, and is reflected in an intended or unintended way in the media, with all its components is worth discussion. For example, the study referred to an article, "The article, in all its details, reflects a specific stereotype about women, and from its title it is possible to infer the content, and perhaps beyond that, by classifying women according to this stereotype, "women and eroticism". The study also indicated that media is still very slow in breaking some social barriers and taboos. Despite the wide range and numbers of violations of women's rights in various fields, this is not reflected in the media in an appropriate manner¹⁴.

A. Facts and Figures on Gender Roles in the Household and Labor Market

1. Gender Roles in the Labor Market

International and local literature extensively addressed the economic role of women. In general, literature demonstrated that gender gaps, so far, still exist in the labor market. Women have not obtained their full rights in economic participation and they face all types of discrimination in the labor market, although many international conventions included the economic rights of women¹⁵. The Report "Global Employment and Social Prospects: An Overview of Women's Attitudes 2018" illustrated the unemployment rates among women in areas like the Arab countries and North Africa is double the unemployment rates of men as the prevailing social norms continue to obstruct women's participation in paid labor. The report also reveals that women face big gaps in the quality of professions they practice. For example, the percentage of women in family works are still double that of men. This means that women contribute to family businesses that are market oriented. Nevertheless, their work circumstances are often characterized with fragility due to the lack of written work contracts, respect for labor laws and collective agreements.

¹³ Ministry of Education. "Education from Gender Perspective". Curricula (Civil and National Education from Grade One to Grade Four, 2015.

¹⁴ Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling. A study of the Stereotypes of Women in Media: Monitoring Coverage of Violations of Palestinian Women's rights for the years (2013-2014), 2015.

¹⁵ The International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and ILO Convention No. 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities of 1981. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals also emphasize the necessity of providing work for all citizens, providing decent work for all women and men, and equal pay for work of equal value, by 2030. Some of the Sustainable Development Goals also focused on achieving gender equality and empowering women by recognizing and appreciating unpaid care and domestic work, by providing public services, infrastructure, developing social protection policies, and promoting responsibility-sharing within the household and family.

Moreover, previous studies conducted by the International Labour Organization indicated that big gaps in wages and social protection exist between men and women¹⁶.

Official Palestinian statistics (PCBS:2020)¹⁷ revealed that women's participation in labor force in 2019 was generally low (18.1%) compared to men (69.9%), despite the fact that women come before men in the education level. In 2019, the unemployment rate was 25.5% of the total number of participants in the labor force in the labor market, 21.3 among men and 41.2 among women. In the same year, the highest rate of unemployment among young people was recorded in the age group (15-24 years) for both sexes (40.1%), 34.7% for men and 67.1%. **Also, the report of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicated that one of the reasons for the low participation of women in the labor market is due to the society's view of women's work. The society prefers men for many considerations related to domestic work, childbirth, maternity leave, breast-feeding, and child care. Additionally, men's body structure makes them preferred to employers in many occupations that require effort such as work in constructions and real estate or in the military sector. Women usually do not prefer work at night for many reasons including family or husband's objection or because they are mothers with children to care for.**

Women's unemployment rate is high especially among women of high education, as the higher the educational level of women, the higher the unemployment rate among them. **Although, the education rate is high among women, the demand for women employment in the labor market still suffers from great determinants and restrictions. In this regard, the PCBS revealed that the private sector prefers employing males in engineering, press and professional jobs in general, forcing females to enroll in jobs other than their specializations such as in education.**

The gap between women and men varies in the labor market, which is reflected in the economic activity among workers. In 2019, women employment concentrated in the services sector and other branches at 73.1%, followed by the trade, restaurants and hotels sector by 11.1%, and then the agricultural sector by 6.7%. This gives a clear picture of society's view of women in the labor market and how it determines the sectors in which they can work. For example, women's non-participation in the telecommunications and construction sector expresses a pre-conceived image toward women, especially that women's role is stereotyped in the services and agricultural sector, which affects the overall percentage of their participation in labor market. **These rates indicate horizontal segregation between men and women at the sectoral level, resulting in concentration of women in a few sectors and limitedness of women's access to some economic sectors as the economic structure does not allow for a wide participation of women in labor sector. The decline of contribution of production sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, in the Gross Domestic Product GDP resulted in a decline of women's participation in these sectors and increased their participation in the services**

¹⁶ International Labor Organization, March 8, 2018. Global Employment and Social Prospects: An Overview of Women's Attitudes, 2018 Report.

¹⁷ PCBS. Women and men in Palestine, issues and statistics, 2020

sector. Literature also pointed out that enrolling to traditional universities and colleges doubled during the last decade, but most females enroll in the fields of health care, education, arts, humanities, science and such others, the fact that decreases their chances to work in unconventional professions in the labor market.

Additionally, the largest percentage of women in the labor force is classified under unemployment, and only about 57.7% of them are classified as employed. The increase in women's participation in the labor force is due to their high participation in the Gaza Strip, but this rise was reflected in the form of unemployment, which means that women went out to the labor market and were classified within the labor force, but their going out did not succeed as they could not obtain job opportunities.

Meanwhile, PCBS data shows that despite of the high education levels among women in the labor market, their work is concentrated in the lower professions and they are less paid. These data also showed that 64% of women work as technicians, specialists, assistants and clerks. In contrast, we find that their percentage in higher professions such as management and legislators is only 4.1%. **The concentration of women in these lower professions also shows the restrictions imposed on women to work in certain professions and not others.**

There is discrimination against women in the labor market in terms of wages **and they may be paid less than the minimum wage.** The wage gap between men and women according to the equation developed by the ILO is 26.6%, which means that women wages should be increased by 26.6% so as to bridge the gap. Furthermore, data indicates that the average daily wage of employees in Palestine in 2019 was 128.6 Shekel, 134.4 for men and 98.6 shekels for women. This indicates that the vertical segregation of women is still in place.

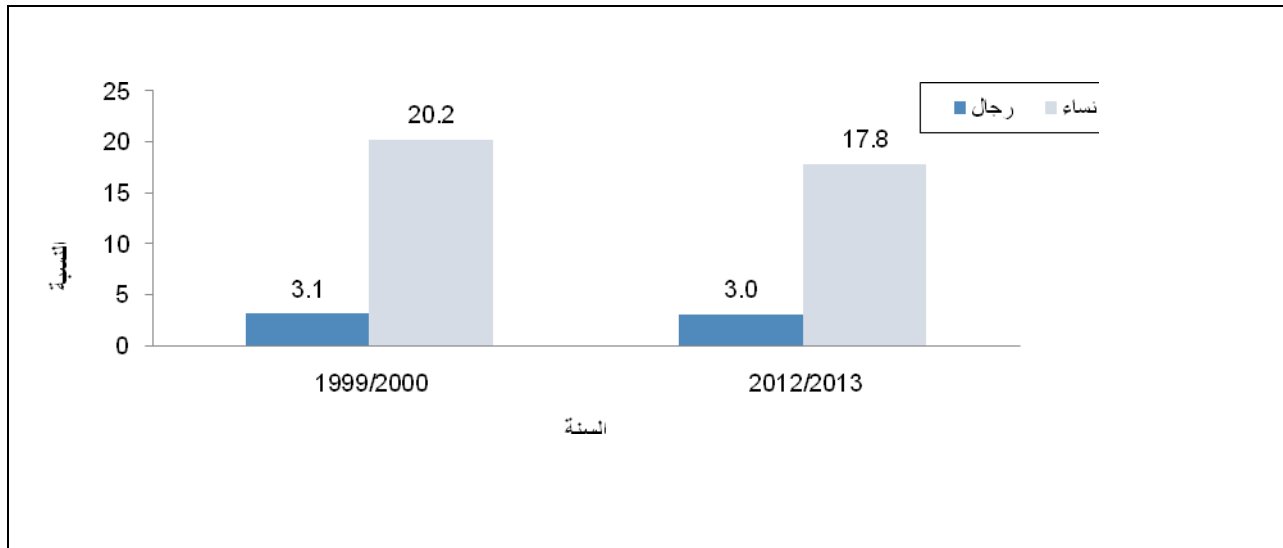
2. Gender and Domestic Care Works

The PCBS official data showed that the percentage of unpaid women working in family business is still relatively high (8.3%) compared to men (3.1%). **This means that women considerably contribute to protecting families from slipping into poverty, need and destitution. Moreover, that indicates the extent of exploitation of women labor force in terms of calculating it in the GDP. But who benefits from it at the end of the day? Men in the family are.** Data also shows that businesswomen's percentage is very low (2.7%) and most of them concentrate in small enterprises in the field of food manufacturing. For example, it is rare to find a woman as owner of plastic factory, Car Company or another similar field. In addition, the percentage of self-employed women reached 11.8%, and they need more empowerment to reach high rates that guarantee competition and a decent life.

Although each work has a wage, but no wages are allocated for domestic care works and they are not calculated within the GDP. It is worth to note that the majority of workers in this sector are women **because of the inherited cultural belief that women's task is caring for children and home.** The data indicate that there is a big gap in time allocated for unpaid domestic and care works (Sustainable Development Indicator, No. 1.4.5). While women spend 17.8% of their daily time in household chores (preparing and serving food, cleaning, sweeping, housekeeping and shopping for household items) and care activities (care for children and the elderly), men spend 3.0% of their daily time on unpaid domestic chores and care work. **This is due to the**

reproductive role of women as they are responsible for caring for children and home more than men do.

Percentage of Time Dedicated to Unpaid Household and Care Work in Palestine from Daily Time of Individuals by Gender, 1999/2000- 2012/2013¹⁸



Data also shows a real gap between men and women in the various age groups in time spent by each of them in carrying out domestic work activities. This indicates that housework and childcare are among the daily tasks of women, which enhances domestic roles towards women rather than men, as women in the age group (25-44 years) spend 27.2% of their daily time in domestic works, compared to only 3.4% spent by men of the same age group. (PCBS, Time Survey Data 2021/2013).

PCBS report also focused on the necessity to endorse procedural policies that ensure men participation in domestic works, due to its importance in increasing women participation in the labor market. The most important procedure is adding an item in the Palestinian Labor Law and the Civil Service Law to allocate a paid annual leave called paternity and care leave.

B. Discrimination in Local Laws on the Basis of Gender

1. The Palestinian Labor Law No. 7 of 2000

After reviewing the Palestinian Labor Law No. 7 of 2000 from gender perspective, the following remarks may be stated: Article 2 of the Law gave the right to work for every capable person on the basis of equal opportunities without any discrimination. Article 100 of Chapter Seven explicitly stated the prohibition of discrimination between men and women. Also, the Labor Law is consistent with the international standards and norms and stipulated conditions and

¹⁸ PCBS. Time Survey. 2012/2013

circumstances in its Chapter Five to have access to decent work and elimination of discrimination. In Chapter 7, the Law singled out special Articles for working women under the title: Regulating Women's Work. But, the Law discriminated against women and set controls on the work of women. In Article 101, the Law prohibited employing women in: 1. In hazardous and arduous works specified by the Minister; 2. Additional working hours for women during pregnancy and the six months after giving birth; 3. Night hours except works specified by the Council of Ministers. Nonetheless, the Law did not specify the hazardous and arduous works leaving the matter to be identified by the Minister, considering that there are physical difference between men and women on the basis of the related societal stereotype (women have less physical capability than men) and consequently women are deprived of working in some professions. Also, prohibition of women to work at night is considered as discrimination against women, especially that the Law did not clarify the reasons for this prohibition, whether it is in line with the society's customs, traditions and culture that restrict women's movement, especially at night, or it is linked to the sex trade and women.

The Labor Law gave women the right to have a paid maternity leave for 10 weeks (Article 103) and a daily breast-feeding hour for one year as of the date of giving birth (Article 104). Article (132) in Chapter One, stated the value of the penalty (50 dinars as a minimum and 100 dinars as a maximum), in the event of a violation of the payment of the minimum wage by employers to workers, but the value of the fine is considered not deterrent and must be raised, given that there is a great deal of exploitation of women by employers. Women do not receive the minimum wage for their work, and they also receive a lower salary than males for the same work. As a result, it is necessary to develop implementation mechanisms, activate the inspection committees and increase the penalty against violators of the Law. The Law was also silent about the need for the provision of nurseries in the workplace by the employers.

The Law also excluded the domestic servants and the like in Article 3 of Chapter Two. It also excluded women who do domestic care work, not considering them as workers, as well as women working in the informal sector. The Law does not include protection for any kind of informal work, which is usually unpaid or little paid. This means that women in informal work are more vulnerable in comparison with other women and men. The Law also needs effective implementation mechanisms and protocols, especially in relation with confidentiality of information when working women submit complaints. The Law has not approved the paternity leave, which will decrease the care works burdened by women once it is approved. Finally, the Law has not addressed issues of violence and sex harassment in workplaces. However, a tripartite dialogue has recently been opened in order to reconsider the Labor Law, and in cooperation with the ILO, it has been harmonized with the Convention (190) with regard to harassment and violence in the work environment.

2. The Social Security Law

This Law has been suspended due to many problems. The Law discriminates against working women in their right to paid maternity leave, as is the case in the Labor Law. Women are not eligible for this right unless they have been subscribing to the maternity insurance for 6 months before giving birth. In comparison with the Public Sector Retirement Law, it does not include

personal, family or high living cost allowance as in this Law¹⁹. The Law also does not include women working in the domestic care works. In 2018, the Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling issued “A Women Strategic Vision”²⁰ on the Social Security Law, which included the Center’s remarks on the Decision by Law No. 19 of 2016 Concerning the Social Security Law. In spite of the importance of this Law due to its close relation with people’s standard of living, illness, old age, pregnancy, work injuries and unemployment, etc, however, it suffers from shortcomings in the required social protection for which it was approved. . This Law included discrimination against women, especially the right of a widowed woman to the salary of her deceased husband, even if she was working. It also deprives the daughter of the right to a pension in the event of her marriage, while maintains the right of the son to the pension, regardless of his marital status.

Birzeit University, the Institute of Law. <http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/lawcenter/ar/2012-11-20-11-35-08/1326-19>
[2016-05-12-10-04-54](http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/lawcenter/ar/2016-05-12-10-04-54)

²⁰ Women Center for Legal Aid and Counseling issued “a Women Strategic Vision” on the Social Security Law, and the Center’s remarks on the Decision by Law No. 19 of 2016 Concerning the Social Security Law (2018)

6. Study Results and Analysis

The different meetings, via Zoom, with the participating students (males and females) in Palestinian universities and activists (males and females) in the field of development, human rights and women's rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, revealed a number of gender beliefs, norms and stereotypes, which played an important role in the traditional division of men and women roles in the Palestinian society.

6.1 Nature of Relation between Men and Women in the Palestinian Society from participants' perspective

Most of the participants described the Palestinian society as a patriarchal society in which men have dominance over women. A female participant said, "Simply this is a patriarchal dominant society and it will continue to look at women in this way because there is no change." **Others described the society as oppressive for women,** as one of the participants said, "we also live in an oppressive society."

Most of the participants pointed out that the relation between men and women in the society is characterized by **dominance, control, exploitation and power.** The male controls women in all aspects of life and in the different stages of her life. On the other hand, **women have to be subordinate, submissive and obedient to the commands of men,** which means that **(the relation between men and women is of submission and dominance.).** In a talk about the emergence of the patriarchy, Gerda Lerner pointed out that the concept of patriarchy is "a manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family, and the expansion of male domination over women in society in general."²¹ With this definition, men have the power and decision in all the institutions of society and women are without power or they are deprived of using it. One of the female participants said that **the relation between men and women is based on subordination of women to men,** adding that "we are used since our childhood that females are weak and they should be under the dominance of males in order to manage their life. I see many girls who cannot talk in the presence of their brothers. In our Arab reality, girls are only allowed to go out if they are with their fathers or brothers. **Females are not allowed to move unless there is somebody (male), she is subordinate to.**"

The writer Hisham Sharabi indicated that **the patriarchal structure promotes authoritarianism in its various forms,** starting with politics and system of government, passing through family and educational system and ending with dominance of the logic of tribe and clan at the social structure level²². **The tribal thinking in our Palestinian society still enjoys power and influence on the society members.** In that regard, one of the female participants commented that "tribal thinking still dominates the way of thinking of some society members, despite of the development and change that are occurring in the society. Some of us are open-minded while others still have tribal thinking." It can be said that the Palestinian society is a

²¹ Gerda Lerner. The Creation of Patriarchy. Translated by Ousama Asper (Beirut, Arab Organization for Translation, 2013) p. 450

²² Hisham Sharabi, Patriarchy and the Problem of Underdevelopment of Arab Society. P.14

patriarchal society par excellence, which confirms the superiority of males and their dominance over females. One of the male participants referred to the role of mukhtars and reformers in promoting the patriarchal culture and identity in Gaza Strip, **“we have a problem in the system of customs and traditions in addition to the mukhtars and reformers, who are the most influencers in the society, negatively affecting women by promoting patriarchal culture and identity.”** For example, a female participant from Hebron confirmed that shame and strictness is the dominant culture in Hebron, **“Hebron is like a stone standing in the mid of the globe and has nothing to do with the whole world. The whole world develops and Hebron is still at the bottom, where everything is prohibited and shameful.”** Another female participant considered Jenin society as conservative, **“In relation with other cities, Jenin society is the most conservative. If a woman wants to work, she will be terribly criticized in Jenin.”**

However, many participants (males and females) pointed out that the Palestinian society is heading toward change, nothing is constant, but the change is moving in slow steps. Some of these participants mentioned a number of paradigms and examples of change that took place in the Palestinian society. Other participants mentioned that Palestinian culture varies in terms of strictness and openness from a governorate to another and from village to city, adding that culture is stricter in village than in city.

6.2 Societal Stereotypes on the Role of Men and Women in Domestic Care works

At the beginning, most of the participants (males and females) in the workshops and focus groups emphasized that there is an obvious division of the roles of men and women in society. The main role of women is the domestic care works and the role of men is centered in the general supervision of the family affairs, home maintenance works, family protection, and decision making related to all matters of the family members such as education, work, marriage and etc, and that the main role of men is in labor market as bread winners. However, they added that this division is in place since thousands of years and has become one of the customs and traditions.

In the same context, all participants stated that domestic care works are shouldered by women and that husbands' participation in home chores is an exception and not the rule. They also said that this division of roles is not a constant pattern in the society and change is inevitably coming. A female participant said, “the chores that men do are limited and the biggest part falls on women's shoulders.”

About a third of the participants are convinced of this traditional division of roles of men and women in society. Some of them also pointed out that this participation is not permanent. Among the reasons mentioned in making this change is women's work outside home or husbands' living and working in another country of different culture (that does not consider husband's participation in home chores as shame or impermissible). Moreover, during Corona pandemic, men had to stay at home due to repeated closures, which led to negative changes, additional burdens and increase in violence, and sometimes positive ones such as helping wives in home chores.

However, the majority of participants aspire to reach a stage in which domestic care works are equally shared between men and women, especially in case women work outside home. One of the female participants said that domestic chores are the responsibility of females, whether wife or daughter and considered males' sharing in home chores is not a shame, adding **“I don't deny that men sometimes share in domestic chores but they are convinced that their role is working outside home while women's role is inside home, my family believes in this concept.”**

In the same connection, a male participant stated that the home care work should be shared equally between the spouses if the wife works outside the home, and if she does not, she should have the burdens of the home. **“As long as the wife is sharing in the financial home burdens, spouses should be equal in home chores, if not, the wife has to shoulder home chores responsibility.”** A female participant said that she hopes that the future relation between her and her spouse be of sharing, “I believe in cooperation and sharing in all aspects of life with my future spouse so as to raise a generation believing in cooperation.”

“Married life is a “participatory identity” in all aspects of life, and it is one of the important foundations for the success of marriage. Husband and wife must accept the exchange of roles, and live in the language of us and not in the language of me, and in a language for us and not in the language for me and you. Accepting the participatory identity will remove all the barriers that prevent the husband from playing the role of the wife, and share the wife in domestic chores. This depends on the awareness and culture of the spouses.”

A university professor/ Hebron governorate

Nearly two thirds of the participants pointed out that assigning domestic and care work to women is a social construction based on biological differences between males and females and that when husbands carry out certain home chores, their conducts and behaviors contradicts what the society expects from them. For this reason they do such works in secret to avoid the society's criticism and reactions. In this context, one of the participants said, “domestic and care works is a gender issue, but it is often considered a work confined in women, according to the traditional and masculine divisions, and that men's work is outside home. This is the societal concept, we do not deny that there are some men who help their spouses in home chores, but they are very few. These men sometimes do not like to be seen by others while doing domestic chores.”

GDP is defined as the total commodities and services produced in a country during a year²³. GDP is related to national accounts. Generally, in all countries of the world, domestic and care works are not considered real businesses and they do not have a market value.

Asking the participants about society's view towards home chores and if it should be included in the national accounts, most of them said that the majority of society , males and females, do not consider home chores as real works and that only works done in the labor market are real and should be paid. A female participant said that home chores are stressful and

²³ <https://alpari.com/ar/beginner/glossary/gross-domestic-product>

arduous, and that women have the ability to endure and be patient, and that is considered a form of stereotyping. “The society sometimes undermines the role of women in their homes and the value of their work, ignoring that they provide the environment for all the house members and provides them with tenderness and kindness in addition to cleaning and cooking. Frankly, hats should be lift for women, and what about women who work inside and outside the house! **A male pointed out the importance of calculating women's work at home within the national accounts for its positive effect on themselves, saying,** "It is certainly necessary to count domestic chores in the national accounts, so that women appreciate themselves and their work."

When asked about their view if they consider home care work real or unreal, the majority of participants consider all domestic and care works carried out by women for the household as real works and activities. They are equal in value and importance to similar works in the labor market and must have a financial value and be included in the national accounts as well.

One of the female participants said, “the care work we, mothers or daughters, do at home is real and there are similar works done outside home. For example, we cook at home while others don’t and eat in restaurants. There are similarities between works done inside home and those done outside home and have financial return because they are doing important things.” **Others said that women do domestic chores with good intent and out of love for her family and they do not wait to be appreciated by others,** “certainly home chores have great value but some men do not appreciate that. As for us women, we work for our homes and for others and so we give value for our work bigger than any value given by others.” **Nevertheless, a few number of participants, not more than the fingers of a hand, considered women’s work in home as not real.**

A male participant pointed out the importance of domestic work for household and Palestinian economy and stressed the necessity of measuring the value of unpaid domestic and care works, “Domestic work is the backbone of the family, and the continuity of society from an economic point of view, if there is no domestic work in the way we see, the society and economic activity collapse. Here, unpaid work must be studied as an obstacle to paid work, and we should evaluate the value of unpaid work.” **Some other participants said that women do not consider themselves as domestic workers and that the domestic and care works they do is their duty and they do not believe that they have the right to have a financial return for these works.**

One of the male participants said: “Unfortunately, women's work is considered a moral duty and is not considered an economic activity, and this leads to social enslavement and exploitation of the value of women's work.” **A female participant from Bethlehem during her work with women in a project said,** “I asked women if they feel that the chores they do at home is a duty or they do it out of love. They were all convinced that it was their duty to work, and that it is not necessary to share it with the spouse, because they were convinced of this idea and that they had the right to have a financial reward, and work should be done on that issue.” Another said, “when a woman is asked about her job, she says that she is unemployed although she does the home chores and some women work inside and outside and do both perfectly without being tired or bored. After finishing their work outside they come home to continue their home chores and care their children.” **A female participant (university professor) indicated,** “During my first

lecture, I usually ask women who of them is a worker, only females with formal works raise their hands, but what about the rest of them! They say they are housewives.” **In the same context, a male participant said**, “I do a lot of trainings and ask women if they work, all housewives consider themselves as not workers, although some of them have small farms they take care of but they say we consider this work as entertainment.” **This shows women’s lack of awareness and comprehension that the domestic care works they do daily are real works and have great value.**

Responding to the question about the extent of husbands’ appreciation to their wives’ domestic chores, the majority of participants said that husbands do not appreciate that, even by saying a kind word, and that men stop working when they return home, while women continue. One of the female participants said, “Sharing domestic works is a good thing. The man who works outside home behaves as a guest at home, asking for coffee and tea all the time²⁴. It is correct that he works outside the house, he is supposed not to deny his wife’s work inside the house, and at least says a sweet word as saying thank you and how was your day.” **They also pointed out that husbands do not classify domestic and care works carried out by wives under real works. In this regard, one of the female participants said**, “It is socially known that cooking and raising children are all the responsibility of women and men only work outside the house. Women work from morning to sunset. When man returns home, he wants to eat, drink and rest, and so he doesn’t consider that his wife is tired working since morning, saying to her go make me food to eat what were you doing since morning and what made you tired. I am the one who is tired, although he may be working in an office, sitting at a table, I mean, he does not have these things or he does not think that she got tired doing the home chores.” A single male participant expressed the importance of domestic work and its actual value through his personal experience, he said, “things accumulated at my home, I had to bring a company to clean my it. The company has worked for two days and I paid (1500 shekels) for it.”

Asking participants about how to compensate and reward women and provide social protection for them in return of the domestic and care works women accomplish in their homes, some believe that the husband may mitigate the burdens of domestic work by bringing a paid cleaning worker to help his wife. If the husband cannot afford a cleaning worker, he then has to treat her at least with appreciation and respect. Others indicated that husbands compensate their wives morally and not financially for the works they do, “nobody compensates financially, they compensate them morally”. On the other hand, there are some men who do not appreciate the works accomplished by their wives financially nor morally, “The woman gives with love and with all her energy to be somewhat happy at home, but at the end of the day she finds her man saying, “What did you do all day?”, here the man denies that the woman works at home although she works 24 hours and that she has time to rest. The most annoying thing for a woman is that she does not hear a sweet word from her man.” **Some participants find that moral appreciation is not sufficient and the husband can reward his wife financially for the domestic and care works she does, by giving her weekly or monthly amount of money to spend on herself.** “Many men allocate for their wives an amount of money to spend on themselves for their efforts.” **And there are those who doubted**

²⁴ Bring me coffee and tea all the time

the man's ability to pay his wife, due to the difficult economic reality in Palestine. Rather, the husband can share his wife the home chores. "We in Palestine due to the economic situation, I don't imagine, for example, that the man, who works 8 hours or less sometimes, can give his wife a part of his salary for what she does at home, and I do not know if husbands have a financial ability to do this. I mean there could be another form of paying her by sharing her domestic and care works. I mean sharing works among wife, children and husband." **Others believe that giving the wife amount of money for her personal expenses is not permanent or continuous. One of the female participants said,** "It is true that some people do this but this is not official (fixed). I mean she may be paid a month and the next month not paid. What usually happens is that the wife the money on the family affairs." **Some others believe that women should establish their own businesses to be financially independent and do not rely on men. In this context, one of the female participants said,** "A woman does not have to charge a specific amount, for the services she does at home, in my opinion, appreciation and respect are the basis and are more important than money, money does not give you value. But at the same time, the woman must be financially independent, meaning that she has her own business, establish her own business before marriage or during marriage, and not rely financially on anybody so as not anybody control her, and let you feel that you are always limited and your capabilities are not such a great thing."

Some participants called on women to go out to work outside the home, and not to depend on the husband, so as to earn money from their income and have financial independence. A female participant said, "Some men rarely can earn the household expenses and in this case they cannot give their wives personal expenses nor can they bring to them servants, but they should at least appreciate and respect their wives. But we also call on these women, who are currently able to work and support their children to work outside home before they grow up and become over sixty. How then can women get social security pension? And how can they get even a small income? If such a woman is still married and goes to the Social Affairs, they would not give her anything, unless she is very old."

Some participants indicated the lack of a social system in Palestine and that there is in place a solidarity system and that is insufficient. They called on the government to provide a social security system, referring to two sources to contribute to financing the security fund: deduction a certain percentage from the employer and another from the husband's salary. In this regard, one of the participants said, "the social security Law was issued and suspended. According to the Law, the employer should contribute to a certain amount of money but under this fragile economy, they cannot. We dream of a state that can provide a retirement salary for women even if they are not working women. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development to embark on conducting social research on the existing situation. This issue needs great lobbying and advocacy campaigns, in order to start raising this issue. The protection of working women's roles and rights is an important issue."

Some other participants commented on the role of the state in providing social security for women who do the domestic and care works, as such works save a lot for the state, "Developed countries deduct about 30% from the salaries of working people, whether man or

woman under the taxes item and give them back to them as retirement pensions after the age of sixty and so these people will have social security salary from the state. This does not exist in our country and we call on the state to deduct a percentage from the husband's salary so as the husband and wife get old age pension. We ask that the money be deposited in wife's name in the bank. The husband's paternity leave is necessary, and should be of no less than a month to be beside his wife to help her with household chores and be a source of comfort and safety for her.”

Some male participants said that household chores need economic and social studies and should have high economic value and the state should assume its responsibilities and duties, “in terms of economic value, the greater burden will be imposed on the state, because it is not only in Palestine that the head of the family cannot compensate his wife for cooking or cleaning the house. This is a global problem, so we have to measure the unpaid work in Palestinian society, and it will be economically measured in the future and economic and social studies will be conducted for unpaid domestic work, and how much the domestic work replaces paid work and people are supposed to know the economic bill.”

Other Participants said that Palestine is not a state and it cannot provide all that, but it should at least provide social security for women, who do the domestic and care works. “I say that we are not living in a state to ask for requirements, which are supposed to be provided by a state. But at least we should have a social security system in place. Our society has a social solidarity system and charitable societies that adopt families by providing them monthly salaries they collect from charity donors. This is in a way or another is not good, although this way provides them with their needs but it also offends their dignity. If there is a country that provides social security, a large part of the expenses of these families would be secured, but not in the way of the Social Affairs check, which is given once every 4 months, and families who get it would be having 10 times debts of its value.”

Many participants indicated the necessity of providing an old-age pension for men and women, over the age of sixty, whether women were domestic workers or housewives. A female participant said in this regard, “old age pension could be a solution to protect or compensate women for the domestic and care works they provide.” **Another female pointed out that there is not an old age pension in Palestine as in Israel,** “old age pension does not exist in the West Bank, why it doesn't exist and why our government is not committed to this, this system only exists in 1948 territories.” **On the other hand, others referred to the importance of solidarity among women to demand old age pension, a female participant said,** “This idea has not yet reached the government, there must be solidarity to convey this idea and convince other people including women themselves to advocate this idea.”

Within the same context, participants clarified that the social solidarity system is not an alternative for the social security system and that the former fulfils a part of the households needs, but it also degrades human dignity, a female participant said, “The concept of social solidarity does not replace the concept of social security. Charitable institutions adopt families on a monthly basis, through the charity of others. This is in one way or another not very good. It is true that it provides their requirements, but at the same time, it somehow offends their dignity. If

there is a state that provides social security, a large part of the expenses will be secured for these families, but not in the way of the Social Affairs check, which is given once every 4 months.”

One of the female participants pointed out the importance of targeting both sexes in small enterprises, so that the man bears a part of the joint responsibility between men and women: “As a Palestinian society, we are used to have solidarity with each other. Women community based organizations have taken the responsibility to fill the government’s place in many families, whether by supporting women’s small enterprises or cooperatives, all of these were targeting women, we targeted women and men together in small enterprises, this is part of the participation and joint responsibility between men and women. This is because when the man feels that his wife works and earns money, he feels that he is losing control, and consequently, he starts to withdraw assets from her, control or waste them. But if the support comes from the state, people will have belonging to the government, which is concerned about them when they become old and when they need its support.”

In the event that women's horizons are blocked, women resort to doing manual work such as making soap to obtain an income. One of the participants said, “women resort to work; I see around many mothers who try to generate an income and depend on themselves, such as making soap because they feel that the government is not standing by their side and their husbands do not financially support them.”

A number of participants suggested the need to reduce women's working hours, especially for those in reproductive age, as this will contribute to increasing women’s participation and obtaining job opportunities in the labor market and approving “paternity leave” to enable husbands to support their wives after giving birth. A female participant said that changing laws supports changing cultures, “I believe that legislation and laws are the best way for change, especially change of behavior and change of culture at the long run. If we don’t address legislation and laws, attitudes will remain as they are now. In the west, fathers are obligated to take a paternity leave as mothers and live the experience. When all women and men work in the labor market, they gain important experiences and visions as exchange of experiences between men and women creates very important cultural integration.” **Others suggested forcing governmental and non-governmental and private sector to provide nurseries in the workplaces. While others suggested registering and sharing the property purchased during marriage equally between men and women.**

And when the participants were asked about the reasons behind this division of gender roles, and the source of stereotypes of women and men in society? The participants pointed to three main reasons: male religious discourse, social upbringing, and community culture.

The Religious Discourse

The dominant religion within any culture of a society helps to explain many of individuals’ behaviors living in it, and it is the best means that help to answer the reason or reality of persons’ behavior in a certain manner. A large number of participants pointed out the role of religious

discourse in shaping and promoting social stereotypes about the role of men and women in society. Most of the participants said that the society considers men as the “providers” and responsible for the livelihood of their families; based on words of God Almighty “Men are the guardians of women, by what God has favored some of them over others, and by what they spend”. And that women are the home sitters, meaning (that the woman sits at home and performs the role of home care), and that the man is favored over the woman. **One of the male participants said in this regard**, “in general, it is the man who works, so it is not normal for him to work in the place of a woman, and I frankly do not encourage a woman to work, because I feel that there is no need and she is responsible for the children... It is possible for a woman to work if her husband is unable to work or is dead... It is an innate nature that the man controls the situation, and so he must work.”

Asking this participant about what does innate nature means, many societal stereotypes emerged, including the superiority of men over women in mind, thinking and decision-making, and women's emotions dominate their thinking. **He said**, “In the Qur’an men are the guardians of women, because the nature of a man’s mind is greater than a woman’s mind, even in estimating circumstances, and with regard to responsibility, the nature of a man in making decisions is greater than a woman’s ... Women’s emotions almost overshadow their thinking. In many emotional situations, they cannot control their decisions and anyone can exploit them.” **Another male participant said**, “Men are the guardians of women but the guardianship falls when they stop spending on them. As women work inside and outside their homes, the meaning of guardianship becomes different.” However, another male participant said that guardianship does not fall in the event of not spending.

These and other sayings are consistent with the strict and male-biased religious discourse, **that God favored men over women because of dowries they pay to them and their spending on them**²⁵. **And that God favored the man over the woman in reason, opinion, status, strength and severity. Whereas women have been inclined to be gentle, kind and tender, and that the man is the one who manages and disciplines her, and this indicates that he has to hold her in his house, and prevent her from going out and that she must obey**²⁶.

It may be said that this is a masculine discourse, deviating from the true meaning of the guardianship. Guardianship (Al-Qawwamah) means service and care for the wife by the husband, and it does not mean preference, and that dropping the social interpretation on the Qur’anic text is considered to be adaptation of the Qur’anic texts in favor of males. This discourse only exalts the man, and considers the woman inferior to him. The Sharia did not obligate or oblige women to perform domestic care work, according to what the four imams said, that it is not obligatory for women to work in the home, and did not prevent women from working in the labor market. It also did not specify the nature of the professions that they should practice. Most of the participants confirmed these provisions, and **a female participant said**,

²⁵ Jami’ al-Bayan on the Interpretation of the Verse of the Qur’an, Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari, investigated by Dr. Abdullah Al-Turki, Dar Hajar 6/687

²⁶ The provisions of the Qur’an, Ahmed bin Ali Al-Razi Al-Jassas, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 2/236.

“Of course, in religion, women are not forbidden to work, but it was formulated in this way. Sharia does not obligate women to work in domestic care work, and the wrong interpretation of the texts of the Qur’an, which is biased towards males, is the source of the problem in discrimination and preference of men over women.” **Another female added**, “Religion did not specify that women should be in home and men outside home, and it did not impose on us not to work, but the sheikhs interpret the texts as they like and spread it as if it is based on religion.” On the other hand, a few participants considered that women’s work in the home as an obligation based on the strict and erroneous interpretation of the concept of guardianship.

Interpretation of Al-Qawwamah (Guardianship) in Sharia

The word qawwam (guardian) in the language, came from the verb qamma, (that is, the one responsible for the thing), and who gives service and care, and that the service of a man to a woman does not include only the usual housework that a woman performs daily at home (such as sweeping, cooking, washing...etc. but the medical, security, social and economic service). Accordingly, the concept of guardianship does not mean that the man is the best, but rather the servants for women and not the other way around.

The Prophet, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, was guardian for the service of his household people. Al-Aswad asked Aisha: What did the Prophet, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, do in his house? She said: He was in the profession of his family - meaning: serving his family²⁷. Because the woman is not obligated to do domestic service, and these acts are among the acts of donation / volunteering or acts of kindness that came in Islamic Sharia. The contract between a woman and a man and basically the woman is a marriage contract and not a service or work contract. Prophet of God, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, would pierce (sew) his shoes²⁸, sew his clothes, milk his sheep and work in his house as one of you works in his house²⁹. Aisha, may God be pleased with her, was asked about what He did in His home, she said: “The Prophet of God, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, He was a human being, He would pierce (sew) his shoes, sew his clothes, milk his sheep serve himself³⁰. This behavior of the Prophet of God, explains that he did not see that it was the duty of his wives to serve him, but rather that is something they donate out of their own accord. The imams of the four schools of thought are of the opinion (that a woman is not obligated to serve her husband)³¹. Accordingly, women perform this service voluntarily.

Socialization / Social Upbringing

It is certain that the institutions of socialization/social upbringing (the institution of the family, school, media, places of worship, theaters and cinema), play an important role in preserving the societal culture, by achieving homogeneity in the ideas, beliefs, traditions and perceptions

²⁷ This interpretation - as in Fath Al-Bari - is from the interpretation of Adam bin Iyas, Sheikh of Al-Bukhari : <https://www.alukah.net/culture/0/111540/#ixzz6izBV4lqi>

²⁸ Pierce his shoes: sew his shoes

²⁹ It was included by Ahmad, Al-Tirmidhi in Al-Shama`il, and Ibn Sa`d, and it is an authentic hadith. Its men are trustworthy, and Ibn Hibban authenticated it (see Al-Fath Al-Rabbani Al-Banna, vol. 22/p. 23).

³⁰ It was included by Imam Ahmad, Al-Fath Al-Rabbani (22/24), and Al-Albani mentioned it in Silsilat Al-Ahadith Al-Sahihah (670).

³¹ Fiqh al-Sunnah, by a previous master (2/184), and Zad al-Ma`ad, by Ibn al-Qayyim (5/188).

prevailing in one society, and works to ensure the sustainability of culture through its transmission from one generation to the next. It also plays an important role in transferring all of the ideas, attitudes, skills, images, social norms, behaviors and values to individuals. It grants the individual customs, traditions, social values, work-related behaviors, and other behaviors, trends, norms and social roles for both sexes, according to their cultural system, norms and directions.

Almost half of the participants pointed out that institutions of social education play a negative role in producing or reproducing stereotypes about roles of men and women in the society. Some believe that socialization/social upbringing plays an important role in reproducing the traditional roles of each sex in the society. In this context, one of the female participants said, “the root of the problem is education and how beliefs about woman’s duties are planted in her brain. I mean, the woman works on basis that what she does is her duty, even she herself, does not make it clear to the husband or the family, that what she does is out of love and kindness from her.

Others expressed the necessity that education should be based on sharing domestic works between males and females. A female participant said, “the girl since her first years will get used to help her mother in the domestic chores. But if mothers assign home chores to all member of the family, things will be different and all will help in the house. If a boy lives in a home where mother and sister do all things, nothing will change. If we want to make change, we should learn since we are born that domestic chore are shared responsibility.” The participants pointed out the discrimination in treatment between males and females in the family. They expressed that the family does not treat male children as it treats females, and that the mother’s role in the socialization/social upbringing of her children at the family level is the most important, **and that assigning this role to the mother basically led to considering the role of the father as a secondary role.** They also indicated that the son imitates his father because the father is the good role model as accepted by the society for him and the girl imitates her mother, who is her model too. Through the socialization/social upbringing of the family, children learn to be boys or girls and also males or females. Moreover, children are taught to do the activities that are considered appropriate for each sex and how communication between them takes place. Participants said that parents bring “masculine toys” for boys such as cars, tanks, fireworks, etc. Meanwhile, they bring “feminine toys” for girls such as kitchen tools, Barbie dolls, and similar things. By that, parents encourage stereotypical toys by sex. Thus, children learn their gender and roles in their early age and absorb rules and norms to control their behavior in a masculine or feminine manner according to their sex. **A female participant said,** “I blame the husband who does not help his wife in domestic chores because he is role model for the male members in the family. If the father shares chores with his wife, the son will learn that and will be like his father when he grows up and vice versa. A female university professor asked her students about the role of women in reproducing the traditional division of roles between men and women, “Do you assign domestic chores for your son and daughter equally? Do you exchange roles? The majority of them said that they culturally assign domestic chores to girls and not boys. For this reason, the boys do not respect home chores. If the sister asks her brother to hang the laundry on the clotheslines, she may be beaten, or hears harsh words, and most of the time, he doesn’t respond to her, women are primarily responsible.”

Good upbringing in the household helps children, especially males, to be self-reliant, even if they receive support or not from parents or people in society. When we teach male children that they have to serve themselves, and not ask their sisters to serve them, we create a challenge for them and they realize that people with or without support inside or outside the family are able to work and serve themselves by themselves.

Participants also referred to the role of school in conveying concepts and gender values and those curricula, through stereotypes, reproduce traditional social division of gender roles and disseminate an array of ready-made oppressive ideas and stereotypes that are not equitable for women and degrade them. Some others considered that the Palestinian educational system does not achieve gender equality, “education is the main lever that may achieve gender equality” The educational system environment means “curricula, teachers, and school environment”.

Furthermore, participants pointed out the role of media in the socialization/social upbringing and those children adopt and imitate what they see in media of behavior, attitudes, ideas and beliefs. For instance, media works to show stereotypes about the connection of women’s roles with domestic care work, and the men’s role outside the home. A female participant said, “Innately, we were born like males, but promotional advertisements, series and programs showing that women’s place is home kitchen planted such ideas in societies.”

In fact, television and cinema play an important role in defining the identity of women, as they portray the woman as, **(the woman is the housewife, who does the housework), (the woman is the mother, who raises the children), (the woman is the wife, who gives birth to children). A good example of this is the "Bab Al-Hara series".** This series depicts women as weak, obedient, tender, emotional, submissive, and without will. The man is also portrayed as authoritarian, controlling, and the provider of the family. If the father is dominant and controlling, then male children will tend to assume the role of father, and thus they tend in their behavior to the masculinity providers.

However, some media programs in the “Voice of Palestine” shed light on gender roles in home, and during the various episodes, the program hosted a group of men, who frankly expressed their experiences and sharing their wives’ domestic works and care. Media plays an important role in consolidating awareness and adding new concepts to society. “There are many men who are frank and tell their experiences on the air and admit that they help their wives with the domestic chores, such as cleaning and cooking. This we didn’t see before years specifically on the media, but there are people who think that if they help their wives, that will degrade their respect. However, the TV episode "Super Papa" for the kids, is about the man who shares his wife in everything.”

Additionally, places of worship (mosques) devote maintaining stereotypes gender roles in society, by repeating and instilling the wrong meanings and intentions of religious concepts such as guardianship. The man is the one who has to work, earn a living and spend on the family; while the woman has to stay at home and do house caring free of charge, thus mixing and seclusion between the sexes is prevented.

Breaking the discriminatory restrictions against women requires awareness and education of both males and females about gender roles, differences in roles are social structures and both are created equal by nature. This requires monitoring, reviewing, analyzing and changing the messages broadcast by the socialization institutions in addition to reviewing and amending curricula, raising children on equality and non-discrimination between men and women, and changing the masculinity religious discourse.

Societal/Community Culture

It's known that culture includes a set of beliefs, values, norms, prevailing customs and traditions, procedures, knowledge, and behaviors that are formed and shared within a particular group, and the culture formed by any person will have a strong and important influence on his/her behavior. Folk proverbs are considered an important part of the culture of peoples that work to consolidate some positive or negative images about issues specific to women, including the role of women in society. Sometimes, they give high status for women and at other times, they degrade women's social status and value.

More than a third of the participants attributed division of labor on gender basis to societal culture. A female participant said, “according to our general culture, men work outside and earn family living and women work inside home, as gender roles specified. **Another female participant said that gender roles are determined by the Arabic culture,** “Why gender roles have not changed, especially in the Middle East and Arab countries. Roles are specified by the Arab culture in which women are for home chores and raising children and men for work outside home.” Women also received the lion's share of Palestinian proverbs, which reflect the reality of women and their status in society, being an expression of social thinking. Some of the participants said that some of these popular proverbs contributed to the formulation of Palestinian culture about division of bender roles as in the following table:

- | |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Your son is what you raised, and your husband is as you made him accustomed to: This indicates the role of the woman in raising children, and accustoming the man to what she wants, at the beginning of marriage.2. The man is a reaper and the woman is a builder: This indicates the role of a man as family provider.3. Women are deficient in mind, and women are said to be deficient in intellect and religion.4. Even if the woman reaches Mars, at the end she goes to cooking: This indicates that the role of women is in home.5. Let a six-year-old girl sit, and if she does not sit, beat her: that is, let girls early take responsibility for the house.6. Sister of men is a man: It means that the woman is courageous, and her behavior, conduct and attitudes are similar to men. |
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Source: Focus groups and workshops of Palestinian university students in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

A large number of participants indicated that customs and traditions play an important role in producing and reproducing stereotypes. “The mentality of society is the reason and also customs and traditions.” **Some female participants pointed out the importance of having understanding between the husband and wife about distribution of roles since the beginning of marriage and formation of family so as it becomes a habit for the husband to share his wife with domestic chores.** “Men refuse to help in domestic works if you make them accustomed to this. But if you were clear from the beginning and put limits for everything and distribute tasks, such things will not happen.”

Some others reported that the culture of the Palestinian society is Islamic, as most of its population are Muslims. A female participant pointed out the problems that occurred in Hebron governorate when talking about the implementation of CEDAW Convention, adding that talking about the issue of domestic work is not a simple matter under this culture, and that this subject needs in-depth study and holding many workshops. Another participant said, “We all know that in our customs and traditions that a woman is obligated to work at home, whether she is an employee or not, regardless of religion, this is according to (customs, religion, and social traditions). However, there is now a change in this view in some families in terms of equality at work and at home. I mean women work inside and outside home, and that puts on them additional burdens, which affects their mental and physical health and so they develop diseases faster than women who only work at home.”

A number of participants believe that culture differs from a governorate to another and between a city and a village. For example, there is difference in culture between Hebron, Bethlehem and Ramallah. A female participant said, “In terms of societal culture, Bethlehem governorate is less restrictive than Hebron, although people in Hebron started to open up but not like in Bethlehem. The issue of women employment is still thorny. It is easier for a single woman to participate in the labor market than for a married one. There will be social pressure on women if they work and don’t stay at home and raise your children and similar things. And so working women will be psychologically stressed and prevented from working. I worked in Ramallah for a while, it is more open than Bethlehem, where some villages say no for women work. From this aspect, Ramallah is much better and much open.” **Villages are more restrictive than cities.**

A male participant from Nablus governorate said that community culture in Nablus is not restrictive, but rather populist centralist. “I believe that Nablus people are populists centralists and not strict in religion and they are not Muslim Brothers. During the time of the Prophet women were working and they helped in building the mosque. Religion has a role, but customs, traditions and existing traditions have more impact.” **One of the female participants considered that the conservative culture and the culture of shame are prevailing over Jenin governorate.** “Religion has never been an obstacle, but the society here transformed the culture

of religion and what is permissible and non-permissible into a culture of shame. People talk and besiege women in the circle of what people will talk about her. In fact, we don't accept the other." **Others considered that Tulkarem governorate's culture as somehow conservative but not restrictive and it is starting to change. Meanwhile, they considered that the societal culture in Gaza Strip and Hebron is conservative and restrictive. Nonetheless, several women were able to break the restrictions related to society's division of professions into traditional and non-traditional, and to enter some non-traditional professions restricted to males and to stand in the face of criticism and negative reactions of society. These situations can be a spark and a lighthouse of change for others. Others said that our cultural system is contradictory in its values and it serves certain individuals and groups, "we sometimes follow certain values that are in line with our interests, interests control us, sometimes we feel that a particular case serves a certain group of men or imperialists, who are concerned with keeping politics as it is."**

6.3 Discrimination and Stereotypes of Gender Roles in the Labor Market

Literature and official data indicated that women's work in domestic and care works deprives them of opportunities of participating in labor force and obtaining a job that enables them to have a salary be economically independent. Discriminatory social stereotypes against women that are biased towards males have contributed to weakening their opportunities in the labor market, as participants in the labor force or as workers in different professions. Among these stereotypes or societal rules, **the division of gender roles in society on the basis of biological differences:** domestic care work is for women and the labor market for men. Additionally, there is discrimination against women in the labor market at the level of professions that women can access and those they cannot access. Also, the relation between employers and female workers is characterized by a certain kind of exploitation in salary and vacations, among others, by the employers due to women's need for work.

When asked about the right of women to work outside home, the majority of participants said that women have the right to participate in the labor market. A male participant said, "Women's work is one of their rights and they have the right to work and help their husbands. It does not matter what people think, what's wrong is to ask others for money when needed." It is worth noting that a very few numbers of participants said that staying at home is better for women **because their role is domestic care works and raising children.** A male participant said, "The man in Gaza Strip refuses women's work in the labor market. He considers the woman as just a contributing person or an active person inside the house, but it is impossible for her to be an active person within the community, whether in the workplace or in decision-making places, or in any other community activities." **One of the female participants clarified that women are not obliged to work if their husbands work and spend on them and that women should be obedient to men whether they are fathers, brothers or husbands.** "If the husband meets the needs of the wife, in this case she is not obliged to go to work outside the house, in my opinion, it is better for the woman to stay in her home. When a woman marries, man should be responsible for her and not cancel her personality, and give her freedom; anyhow, I should obey my husband or the person responsible for me." **Others believed that preventing women to**

participate in the labor market is considered an economic violence under the guardianship of men, and leads to a misdistribution of resources and a decline in development, productivity and economic growth. Some others pointed out that society does not exempt women from domestic care works in the event she works outside home and consequently, women have to manage their time. A female participant said, “even if the wife works outside home in the labor market, when she comes back home, she performs the normal role imposed on her by environment and society.” This means an increase of burdens placed on women, if the roles are not shared between men and women. **One of the participants described the failure of sharing gender roles is a mistake**, “even if the woman works outside the house, she will be responsible for the work inside the house too, of course this is something wrong.” Some of the participants indicated that women have the right to work, provided that their work should be restricted by conditions.

Among these conditions: the woman should not neglect her house chores and care, (that is woman’s work outside the home does not exempt her from domestic care work), not to work at night, work should not be exhausting for her body and preserves her dignity, that she goes out within Sharia controls, and that the best work for women teaching, because this profession does not require long hours outside home, and it gives long vacations. Some participants referred to the importance of women’s integration in the society and working in the labor market in refining their personalities. A female participant said, “when the woman goes out, integrate in society and put limits for anybody, she develops a strong and leadership personality capable to deal with any attitude she encounters.” Another female said that the experience of women in the labor market teaches them and refines their personalities, “The woman does not live the economic moment, but rather lives the socio-economic experience that follows it. Integration by experience, whether inside or outside home is important as both of them refine women’s personalities and knowledge.” **Some of the participants indicated the need for family members to share all household burdens and responsibilities among themselves, in case of women engagement in the labor market.**

Asking about the source of this division in professions between men and women in the labor market, most of participants stated that society is responsible for this division; others considered that choosing a profession is a personal freedom for women. In this regard, a female participant said, “for me, we follow the society's desires, it’s not necessary that society tells the truth. I mean, it shouldn’t be specified for women or men what work, why should we be walking with the herd? **And when they were asked about the capability to work in all professions like men**, participants had different views on this issue. Some believe that women can work in all professions regardless of differences between men and women; **others believe that women are unable to work in all professions, especially professions that need muscular and physical strength or those that are not appropriate for women. Some other said that all professions (traditional and non-traditional) should be open for women as for men and that the decision to work in these professions is for women themselves and not for society. A female participant said**, “All professions are open to males in the labor market, but women have limited options, and community culture differs between cities and villages in the Bethlehem governorate, and from one governorate to another; for example, Ramallah governorate is more open than Bethlehem and Hebron governorates.”

Despite these discriminatory restrictions against women in the Bethlehem governorate, women were able to break them and work as taxi drivers and delivering orders. One of the female participants said in this regard, "I heard from my uncles, and my cousins, that their options were wide, and they could do more than one job, but women were not. This is of course was determined by them as what acceptable by society, and that women cannot work as taxi drivers." The Bethlehem Governorate is considered to be open and accepts women's work in non-traditional professions, compared to other governorates due to the difference in culture, but there is a difference between Bethlehem, the city and the villages. "Bethlehem is very open and accepts these things, even I know many girls who work as taxi drivers, (we have two girls, and we have girls who deliver orders - Delivery), the delivery worker if she was from the villages, she would face many troubles, I think. Bethlehem is very open and accepts these things. Bethlehem Governorate is better than Hebron in terms of culture, Hebron is more difficult than Bethlehem, in Hebron there are people who have begun to open up, but it is not like here for a woman, so the issue is thorny for them. . Working outside home for a single woman is easier than for a married one. There will be social pressure on women if they work and don't stay at home and raise their children and similar things. And so working women will be psychologically stressed and prevented from working. I worked in Ramallah for a while it is more open there than in Bethlehem. From this aspect, Ramallah is much better and much open." **More than half of participants considered customs and traditions play a role in reproducing traditional division of gender roles, a participant said,** "society mentality is the cause and so customs and traditions."

From another point of view, participants expressed their acceptance of night work for women only as nurses or doctors in hospitals, due to the safety element in the workplace. But many participants objected women's work as taxi drivers or delivery workers at night. This is because such works contradict society's norms and rules. "Not nice for women to work as taxi drivers at night, they can do this job during the day." **Here, we see that some of the participants linked the work of a woman as a taxi driver or in delivering orders to danger, and they did not see that the woman just carrying out (delivery service), and there is no justification for fear and anxiety. They are not used to see a taxi driver or a woman delivering orders in their society. In societies that do not have stereotyped gender roles, we see that women work as train and bus drivers...etc. One of the participants indicated that both males and females may face risks in the profession of delivering orders, but this is linked to the reputation of the girl.** "If man is exposed to risks, his reputation will not be affected as it affects female's reputation." **There are also those who considered that women's work in masculine occupations such as mechanics, tiling or construction undermines the woman's femininity. A female participant said,** "Work of a woman in the field of mechanics is not acceptable, especially if she bends down under the car, nobody looks at man if he does this but all will look at the woman." **Here we notice the society links woman's work in some professions to her body, and minimizes the image of the woman in the concept of the body, and that the woman's body is desirable, and it is awrah (defect), but the male is not seen as a source of fear and anxiety for the family, even if he is guilty.**

Some participants refused stereotyping women's work and restricting it in specified professions (as taxi driving or delivery) as a female participant from Jenin expressed. "For my part, I worked at night in training dogs, which is specific for men despite of the community objection. I absolutely don't care for the community view. I see it right and I love it, and there is nothing wrong with it. On the contrary, there are solutions to confront dangers outside, so if someone harms me at night, I can learn self-defense" **I can say that society's rejection for woman's night work is attributed to the honor concept.** "The society views women's night work as if they are going to a discotheque or a nightclub, and not going to work and perform a duty," **a male participant said.**

Despite the discriminatory societal restrictions against women in the labor market at the level of the profession, there are some examples of women who acted in violation of these unofficial discriminatory societal rules and norms, and were able to break into some non-traditional male professions in the labor market, and have not withdrawn, under the weight of responses and pressures of society rejecting this behavior, such as working as a bus driver in Jerusalem. In this regard a female said, "A woman in Jerusalem governorate challenged the society and worked as a bus driver despite the opposition of her community, considering that profession as a masculine one. Religion did not specify what a woman can work and what man can, why we don't leave the issue for the woman herself to decide if the work is suitable or unsuitable for her and not others to decide, we can try and decide." **At the same time, there are some female role models, who broke into male professions, and as a result of the society's rejection and reactions, they did not continue and withdrew from the labor market.**

A male participant spoke about the role of customs and traditions in restricting women's work in labor market in Jenin, saying, "Customs and tradition suppressed women in our society, considering men as everything and that girls bring shame and such stories. For example, when my friends saw girls working in restaurants, they started talking about them, I asked them why, they told me that this job is inappropriate for women, such are our customs and traditions."

One of the young male participants pointed out that the guardianship (qawammah) concept, customs and traditions restrict the freedom of women in terms of work and education in Gaza Strip and the negative role of the mukhtars and reform men in promoting masculine culture and identity. Among the stereotypes that emerged from the concept of guardianship, is that the man is the main provider for the family, and he is the one who must work in the labor market. "The concept of guardians of women remarkably exists in Gaza Strip, where women suffer from restrictions of freedom in the field of education, work, and social relations. Guardianship forced women to stay at home. The problem is that we lack a fertile ground to build on it, support women or amend the concept of guardianship of men on women. But I believe that the issue of guardianship, if religious texts are taken correctly, will give a great role for women in society, and they will have a completely different role from what we basically know or are familiar with, but we remain restricted by customs and traditions and this is a problem."

The social system is considered incoherent in the Gaza Strip due to the role played by the political parties, reformers, customs and traditions, in addition to the absence of some laws such as the Social Security Law, and other existing laws that are inappropriate to achieve justice and gender equality in the field of economic rights and social protection, in addition to the lack of control over the implementation of the Labor Law regarding the minimum wages. “it is necessary to enact appropriate laws, I mean today a woman who has no income, has no guarantee, given that the social system is very incoherent. Political parties had a role in this matter, with reform men, customs and traditions, even laws are not appropriate to guarantee rights, equality, and achieve justice between men and women within society. I much support that a social security law be in place and applied in regard with the minimum wages. This is because women who work in nurseries or other professions do not earn the minimum wage as stipulated by law, even not half of it, sometimes, such women earn 400 or 500 shekels in nurseries, although the daily work hours in nurseries is 8-10. Moreover, by amending the existing laws, we may establish an integral democratic society that achieves justice for men and women.”

Some participants considered that the society believes that women are unable to do everything like men. “Society does not think that women are capable to do what can be done by men.” **But this did not prevent women from breaking through some masculine professions, a female participant said,** “a woman can work in any field she wants, even they can work in carpentry.” **In Gaza Strip, a woman from Khan Younis worked as a driver and did not withdraw under the pressures and negative reaction of society, because she had her own ambitions. A female participant pointed out that she was studying medical secretary, but she thinks that her parents will not allow her to work in such a job,** “my parents have traditional thinking like their parents; they believe that women should not work outside home. Women in Gaza Strip could break through some non-traditional professions, for example a woman worked in a gas station, another in mobiles shop and another opened taxi office for women despite the negative reactions but they did not back down.

Women find it difficult to get a job in the labor market, and they are exploited by organizations, especially in the case of voluntary work. European countries are working to provide job opportunities for women and force them to work and the best example of this is Sweden. “As for women’s work outside home, women go to organizations or places seeking help from them to obtain a job opportunity, whether volunteering or for an income; they face a lot of difficulties to find a job. If the woman volunteers in an organization, the staff will assign her with work beyond her capacity. Foreign countries force women to work I know this through my friend who lives in Sweden and I am in contact with her. In the event that the woman is the custodian of a child or is presuming her study, she is exempted from this work, where are we from this favor that the state does for its people?”

Participants reported that what the Ministry of Social Affairs (now called Ministry of Social Development) provides for widows and divorced women is insufficient to live decently. A female participant said, “What the Ministry provides every six months for widowed and divorced women is insufficient.” The Ministry also does not support unemployed female university graduates, she added, “public money is a right for all people without exception.

If an unemployed married woman with university degree asks for support, the Ministry will refuse to help her because she is not a widow or divorced, this happened with my friend although her husband is unemployed.”

The majority of participants pointed out that women can work in all professions like men, while others said that women cannot work in certain professions like in “construction” on basis of biological and physical differences and stereotypical beliefs “the physical capabilities of men are more than women’s.” However, others rejected this belief saying that women’s physical capabilities are more than men’s as they show great physical strength during childbirth, and that women since ancient times have been engaged in agriculture and in works and activities that require effort and endurance, such as picking, weeding and plowing. Women also do plowing on tractors, as in Jericho Governorate (the Jordan Valley region), and they also help in construction, carrying stones, cement, etc. A female participant from Jenin said, “I object, from a physical point of view, that the man is stronger than the woman, because we have the ability to bear the pain of childbirth, and this is scientifically proven. Nothing prevents women from working in construction works, or in car repair garage, if they want. In this case, the community must encourage them, including, the father and brother. What is the problem if the woman works as a waitress or a cook in a restaurant to be economically independent?” In this regard, one of the male participants said: “There are women in Jenin who have physical ability to work as men.” A female said that the biological differences between men and women created inequality in religion between them in all aspects. “There are biological differences that prevent women from working (in mechanical works), because traditionally this is done by men, man might be better in a certain profession and it might be the woman, and it is possible that by training the woman becomes better than the man, it is possible for a man to be better in construction than a woman. I mean, there are differences, and for this reason religion does not equalize between women and men in all respects. This is a kind of tendency. The woman will not be inclined to do (construction) works, and the man will not be inclined to (cook). Another female participant said that the woman has physical ability but the societal culture sometimes limits these abilities and exploits them. “the woman has physical ability but the societal culture sometimes limits these abilities and exploits them” We note that women are restricted to a certain type of works, as society considers that these jobs are appropriate to a woman's physical capabilities.

A female participant considered that women’s unemployment in construction is an honor to the woman and her body, “girls don’t work in the construction sector, which is a kind of honoring them and their bodies. Not because they can't do it, but because the nature of the female, they don't have the physical ability, it's not nice to work in building.” Others pointed out the issue of fear and insecurity of mixing with males, a female said, “a woman can work as chef in a women’s restaurant or taxi driver for girls. Many people don’t like that their girls use taxis driven by men; they prefer women drivers.” Here, we notice that some women have not a problem that women work in professions considered masculine par excellence, such as working to provide services only to the category of women without men, by opening (a restaurant or coffee shop for women, a mobile phone shop for women, a taxi office for women). This trend exists in the Gaza Strip, as one of the participants indicated that she

and her family will open a taxi office for women in the West Bank, but this approach can reinforce the concept of preventing mixing or segregation between women and men in society.

Being emotional is among the feminine characteristics that society defined women with. One of the female participants said, "I believe that according to our physical and emotional nature, and our formation as women, not all professions are appropriate to us, the same thing is for men, not all professions fits them. I mean, we have capabilities in which we excel over men, and they have capabilities in which they are superior to women. It is impossible to see a woman making concrete, or see a man working in a nursery. I mean God created us in different capabilities. **Others linked between women's emotions and their ability to make decisions. For this reason, we don't see women working in the judiciary sector (judges).** A male participant said, "the general view of society is that a woman is an emotional person and cannot make a decision inside the place where she is." **Others see that physical differences should not be generalized to all women, as a female participant expressed,** "we are not certain if it is not possible for women to work in concrete, some women cannot but others can, and we shouldn't cancel their right to work. There are women who can and have interest in such works. The female farmers in the country are very strong; a woman of them is equal to ten men. They have physical strength and can work in all jobs, they did not choose to work in agriculture but is imposed on them, because it is socially acceptable. I believe that we should not determine for women what they can do and what they cannot. Let them choose."

Other participants believe that the society specified characteristics and traits of "femininity" with shyness, softness, long hair and other things. Thus, women cannot work as auto mechanic or taxi driver because that affects their femininity. A female participant said, "these characteristics and traits are based on stereotypes of females. A female must be shy, soft, have long hair and such things. This stereotype is imposed on women by society. If a woman works as driver or mechanic, she will be criticized and her femininity injured. A woman should not be injured from engaging in such works, she should be proud of that."

A female participant said that working in construction may cause physical and health harms for women, thus they should not work in this sector unless technology enters this profession or if there is desire to work in it. "I am not going to work in construction because that may cause harm and problems for my health. I am different from the man. If I have a desire to work in this sector and technology enters it, I will and let the society criticize us, they will continue talking but we must challenge all. Our society stands with man, regardless of how much women try to make change. Our society is tribal and we are not able to get out of the box, we still think inside it."

Some of the participants highlighted other stereotypes in society that differentiate between women and men. In their view, man is considered to be better than woman in many matters such as reason, competence, and ability, (meaning that men are better than women in their ability and performance efficiency), in this regard, a female participant said, "we always consider that man is competent, he can and he deserves while the woman is less and it's

not necessary to work.” **Others consider men smarter than women or that the mind of man is better than the woman’s mind, A female said,** “a female teacher told us that the man is smarter than the woman, there are more male scientists and writers, they can make their dreams true while it is difficult for women to realize their dreams. I think that women are often engaged in family matters especially if they are mothers. If there is cooperation in home, women can become writers or scientists. **Also, there are those who consider a woman’s thinking as a web that can think of many things at the same time, but the man can only think of only one thing. A female participant said,** I studied at the university that woman’s mind can think of more than one thing at the same time, and in more than one way (women are multitasking), while man just wants things to be direct, and take things directly without thinking.” **We also note here that women are restricted to certain jobs by society, considering that some jobs are not consistent with women’s intellectual abilities compared to men.**

Some others blame women themselves, for choosing a life partner, who would limit their abilities and ambitions. “I expect when you choose your partner if his mentality does not match with yours and his ideas are different from what you believe in. And when you believe in your right to work and does not believe in your abilities and wants to cut my wings, why should you accept him as a partner.” **Another female pointed out the importance that the husband is open-minded,** “I’ll talk about the change in my life. I am coming from a family where gender division is clear with males having more privileges. But when I learned and mixed with people of different backgrounds, I met an open-minded man who participates in the political life and we got married. I believed in the idea of assistance between spouses but he rejected this idea and stressed on sharing.” **A female participant commented that women should be strong and believe in their abilities and in themselves,** “if the woman was strong and believed in herself, she will succeed but when she is fragile and weak, everybody will interfere in her affairs.”

Some participants highlighted the issue of discrimination in salaries against women, where women get a less salary than men for the same work. A female said, “I watched an interview with a woman doing a job usually done by men; she was saying that she works the same hours and shifts that men do, but her salary is lower.” **Asking about reasons for this discrimination, the majority of participants said that the society considers man as the main family provider while woman’s role is secondary. Also, they said that society considers men as more competent and better than women,** “there is belief that man is more competent to do the job and so he is given a higher salary.”

And there are those who pointed out that many of the rights of male/female workers working in private institutions or companies are violated. The reason behind this is the nature of the relationship between the private sector and the government sector. If the owners of capital reach decision-making positions, or mutual interests arise between the two parties, the implementation of rights by the state becomes unrealistic and unenforceable. For example: we see that private companies give women salaries less than the minimum wage set by the government, or give women salaries less than men's for the same work, and the rights of male and female workers in case of work injuries are violated. One of the participants and workers in one of the private sector companies said, “In the month of Ramadan, the work hours become less; we work 6 hours instead of 7 and a half hours.

But the company in which I work supported the government with a decent amount of money; in return, we have a working day (seven and a half hours instead of 6 hours) in Ramadan, like in normal days. Also, it used to give some privileges and coupons to employees, but they canceled them under the pretext of Corona, and in order to cover this issue, they gave imaginary sums of money to the government to silence it, and this is how the owners of capitals are the controllers and not the government”

On another level, some participants said that employers exploit the feminine characteristics of girls, so they tend to employ women or girls to work as secretaries to attract customers. A female participant said, “I heard the manager saying that man earns the living of his family while woman only needs the money to spend on herself. My manager needed to employ a female secretary and I asked him why, he said, first, because the female is diplomatic and nice and brings customers and, second, she will not ask for high salary.” She added, “here is the problem, we don’t appreciate ourselves; some girls work six days a week eight hours a day with a salary of 800 NIS.” It was also mentioned that one of the reasons why women get a lower salary than men is that they do not appreciate themselves. “Women value themselves less than men, and they are their own enemy, and this is due to family upbringing, which distinguishes in treatment between males and females.” Based on economic need, women are content to work at a lower salary than males, and also receive a salary lower than the minimum wage, which is (1450 shekels/month) as set by the Ministry of Labor.

We notice that employment of women by some business owners is not innocent as they exploit their feminine characteristics, bodies, kindness, excitement and temptation to attract customers, in addition to exploiting them by giving them low salaries without regard to their humanity.

It was also mentioned that females in the labor market suffer from bad treatment and insulted by employers, a female participant said, “some girls are insulted and humiliated and they keep silent, while male youth don’t accept to be insulted and defy the employer even if they lose their work.” One of the participants also mentioned her experience and suffering with one of the media organizations, and about the arbitrary dismissal of female employees, especially in light of Corona, and the companies’ exploitation of women’s need to work, and their burdens of work greater than the value of the salary given to them. She also expressed that the unions and associations have negative roles in defending the rights of workers, she said, “I lost my job because of Corona, and I am responsible for my family and I tried a lot to do things, but I am surprised that the only concern of my community is to know who I am working with and what is their morals. Society puts a lot of pressure on us and does not leave for us opportunities. I was a journalist in a media organization, because of Corona, it was unable to pay my salary, so they told me we are sorry and thank you. They employ girls because they know that girls are the weakest link, and they put pressure on us threatening that we could be fired at any moment. Moreover, they employ girls because they know that they accept low salaries and if we protest, we are the losers. When I asked for a salary increase, I was fired under the pretext of Corona. More than that, there were pressure campaigns on my female colleagues, and unfortunately, they submitted their resignations. I was doing the work of 3 employees.”

Despite this and that, women do not resort to filing complaints against employers, so as not to lose their jobs, even if it is an inappropriate job. Some say that a woman chooses between two things, the best of which is bitter, either low salary or the loss of work, “sometimes the need compels the person to accept anything, because it is better to work and get a small salary, than to extend your hand to the people.”

And there are those who attributed women’s low self-esteem to education and family upbringing. One of the participants said, “The basis for women’s under-estimation of themselves is due to their early education. Our society tolerates what boys do, it is normal for a boy to do it, but it is not normal for a girl to do the same thing. Girls are held accountable and suppressed, which will make the girl appear weak and lack self-confidence, even if she is right, and the boy will have a strong personality and self-confidence.” **However, the mayor of Beit Liqya pointed out the importance of the husband’s support for his wife, in order for her to succeed and bear the criticism and reactions of society, and pointed out that the presence of women in decision-making positions helps women express their needs, she said,** “My husband is the main supporter for me, if he feels that I am a little desperate or frustrated, he frankly supports me saying that I can, regardless of what others say about me, adding that there are many supporters for me. In the municipality, people including youth, elderly and children started to visit me to express their needs.”

There are those who pointed out that the difficult economic situation in Palestine contributed to changing the social roles of families. One of the female participants said that leaving some women to work is not an option but rather a compulsion, "Man has become unable to support the family by himself alone, which forced the woman to start working outside home."

Clear gaps exist between males and females in decision making positions. The PCBS indicated that men obtain leadership positions more than women do. “Supposedly, women should be in leadership position in society or in the students’ councils in universities. But unfortunately, women do not support women and they support males considering them more competent and criticize females who participate in this field.” **Some believe that change should come from individuals and we should work to make change,** “We are the foundations of society and to make change, everyone must start by him/herself.”

The participants mentioned an important point, which is related to man’s control over the woman’s salary and over her property or the family’s property. Also, some pointed out that man controls the salary that the woman receives due to women’s unawareness that they have the right to an independent financial liability like men. One of the female participants said, “the woman is ignorant of an important point, which is her right to independent financial liability, she does not feel that she must have such a liability even if she is not working, she must have her own money, even if it is from her parents, father or brother. For example, I know an employed woman who bought a plot of land with her money but registered it in her husband’s name. She also helped him to build a house on the land but the husband eventually betrayed her and married another woman who lived in the house over her land. Now she is seeking help from judiciary to preserve her right, unfortunately the judiciary did not do her

any justice.” Another woman who works in Jawwal Company bought an apartment and registered it in her husband’s name. I advised her to register it in the name of both of them but she refused saying that she doesn’t suspect her husband. I told her this is your right, and for your personal interest and the general interest of your children. **A male participant mentioned the behavior of a husband with his wife in front of the ATM machine**, I think this is necessary, I saw a quick situation in front of my eyes of a husband and his wife who were standing in front of the ATM, the wife was an employee, and she did not want to withdraw money, but the husband forcibly took her card and withdrew money from her account.” **A female participant pointed out that economic empowerment does not only mean to empower women to have a job opportunity and a salary, but also to have control over her salary.** “From the reality of the situation, some women in high positions who do not own anything but their expenses; their husbands have control over their money and their ATM cards.” **One of the female lawyers pointed out to what women are exposed to if they insist on their economic independence, and among these is divorce. Therefore, there must be a law protecting women.** “Their insistence on their position regarding economic independence and home ownership led to divorce. The law doesn’t protect women.”

Some participants pointed out the importance of the Labor Law in regulating the relationship between workers and employers, and protecting workers’ rights, adding that this Law needs to be amended, as issues have arisen that the Law did not take into account, such as domestic servants, women farmers, remote work, and domestic work, freelancers allowances...etc. A female participant said, “Nowadays, we have new jobs related to domestic work, remote work, which became popular in Gaza Strip especially in the technology, information and communication sector, freelancing, voluntary work and workers under training.” **Another female indicated the importance of a law that guarantees the right of women to work and their right to be protected,** “Thus, women’s work is a personal decision for women, the law should give me the right and then the option is for me.³²” **But the talk here is not only about legal obstacles, but also social, if women decide to work in the labor market, then the guarantee of the law for the rights of women, and non-discrimination against them, is not sufficient due to the fact that social obstacles exist.**

Some participants pointed out the importance of education in making positive change regarding division of traditional gender roles and change of parents’ concepts, “there is a positive change in the Arab world regarding division of roles between the past and the present, especially in light of female education in Palestine and in the Gaza Strip. This made a change in concepts, personally, before I worked, and while I was studying, there were restrictions at home, and after I worked, my parents’ concepts changed.” **The experience of a female participant affirmed that the education curricula reproduce and deepen the traditional roles of men and women, she said,** “I was a school principal, and I reviewed all the curricula from the beginning to the Tawjihi, gender roles remained the same, Layla has been cleaning dishes since the nineties, and up to this day. I reviewed the curriculum for the tenth grade in civic education, I didn’t find any change in the roles and theories that aim to expand the perceptions of students.

³² Personal option to work or not

The Palestinian curricula developer is still deepening the roles and the school deepens and consolidates the roles.”

7. Society’s Reaction to Men and Women Breaking Discriminatory Rules and Stereotypes of the Roles of Men and Women in Society

Gender ideologies include norms and rules related to conduct and define traits / characteristics. They also reproduce a set of beliefs and customs in support of these social norms and rules, which are maintained by rewarding those who conform to them such as (status in society) and socially punish those who do not conform to them (such as gossip, ostracism, violence...etc). The strength of these rules lies in the fact that they appear consensual and non-negotiable, while in reality they are based on inequality and power. These rules are so well-established that if a man or a woman tries to break this stereotype and act differently from what is expected of each of them, they are considered by society to be unnatural. For example, women working in some non-traditional professions, who are responsible and able to make their own decisions in our society, are stigmatized as “mannish or the sister of men”, while a man who does not behave in a masculine manner is stigmatized³³ as “not a man/ he is a woman or a feminine”. Describing a woman as a masculine, meaning giving a woman the qualities of manliness of strength and courage, and that she has an attitude...etc, and describing a man as a woman or a female, meaning belittling a man, and it is considered a form of insult, cursing, and belittling one's status and self.

Women who broke the discriminatory rules in the Palestinian governorates faced different forms of reactions and consequences by society. Participants from different governorates pointed out some of those women paradigms who dared to break the discriminatory restrictions and social rules regarding their work in untraditional professions.

The participants indicated that women in Jenin governorate encounter numerous obstacles and pressures in case they go out to labor market or travel outside the country, specifically in Jenin villages and other governorates where work of women in certain professions that do not fit women’s nature is unacceptable. For example, a woman from Maithalon village got a driving license for heavy truck and went beyond what is customary in society, this profession is traditionally for men, and this woman was subjected to criticism, pressures and severe consequences, which eventually led to her to draw back. She was described as mannish, and she was boycotted by her brothers and women in society, and forced to marry again, despite her unwillingness to do so. These pressures are various and serious from society on women and men. The power of norms and expectations can be so great that people comply with them, even when they conflict with their personal beliefs and attitudes.

“As soon as she started training to take the license, the community as a whole started telling her that this is not her field, this is a masculine work and part of her brothers boycotted her, and

³³ Stigma: is the naming or labeling of an individual undesirable by others, in a way that deprives him/her of social acceptance, or society’s support for him/her because he/she is a different person from the rest of society.

considered that what she was doing is wrong. Her brother has a waste recycling plant and she used to work with him. So, she took the license to drive the truck they were working on. All people in village started to say that she is mannish and some women refused walking with her in the market because she is not like them. After a period of time, she left the job because she had a little child and she was divorced. Even her brother did not want her to work with him anymore. When she used to go to the Transport Department for training, she was harassed by people there, saying why you don't get a car's license. Eventually she submitted to society although she had a strong personality and remarried although she didn't want so to put an end to people's talk."

On the other hand, girls in Nablus and Jenin governorates started working in restaurants, despite the society's objection considering it as violation for society's roles. A female participant said, "When a restaurant (Hab Alryeh) employed girls, all Jenin people objected but the girls continued and people accepted their work in the restaurant. Currently, girls are working in KFC restaurants, which was unacceptable before but with girls' insistence, it became normal."

Another female said, "a woman worked as a waiter in a restaurant in Tulkarem but the society objected to her work although she did not have a problem with that, she said, "In our community, girls who work in such professions are few. People ask how you will serve men as all the restaurant's clients are males and how you will bend down and how you will move. I didn't have a problem in opposing the society in things I can do." **Also, in Tulkarem, a woman worked as a bus driver and another as a taxi driver for children, women and families only.**

Young men and women were mocked when they formed albacore sports team, "which is a sport restricted for men in Nablus. An initiative was launched in October, and a team for the sport of albacore was formed of young men and girls. The girls were mocked. We were mocked and belittled on social media. We have other problems as this game is mixed, our families had fears for our reputation as girls." **Also, a journalist tried to break the routine or stereotypes of women in Nablus. Another said that a woman was subjected to insults by the community because she worked as a taxi driver but she didn't continue. But women working in restaurants were able to face and endure the societal criticism, a female participant said,** "In Nablus, a woman can work as a waitress in restaurants, but I mean, for example, in Ramallah or Bethlehem, this is something very normal, but in Nablus it is not an easy issue, as women have a problem facing societal criticism, however, girls are breaking the norm , for example, women teach driving, which was for a long time a male profession, but over time it became accepted." **Change needs time. Due to women's insistence to work in restaurants, the number of women working in the old town of Nablus increased.** "In the old town, the number of working women in creased from one to 5-6. More women are entering the labour market especially those with education who want to help themselves and their families. Gradually work of women in untraditional jobs becomes acceptable." **A woman from a village is working as a blacksmith,** "she goes to houses and workshops to take measurements and returns to the village, does the task and goes again to install her work." **I also know a young girl who was studying something related to mechanics and car repair.**

In Gaza Strip, women worked in traditional professions that were restricted to men. They worked as fisherwomen, Mukhtars, workers in gas station filling fuel and such others. A male participant said, “a girl worked in a gas station for one day and people started talking about that but she didn’t give concern to anyone as long as she was convinced and she likes the job. Let them talk once, twice, three times but finally they will stop and the issue becomes normal.” some women also opened mobile stores, one of the participants said in this context, “At first there was rejection and then acceptance. The important thing is that the woman should have passion for her work, for example, the woman who opened a mobile phone shop from scratch, people criticized her, but now she is successful; this is an example of success.” Another woman opened a taxi office exclusively for women, and there was a rejection by the community, and when the community felt that this could provide safety for women commuters, it was accepted. But what is remarkable is that women, while working in these professions, provide services to women only and not for men and women. Here the question is if the aim of the separation is to enable women to penetrate the rules of society and work in non-traditional occupations? Or is it an intellectual approach that serves the concept of segregation? One of the participants pointed out in this regard, that we see contemporary patterns that reinforce masculinity and segregation between the sexes; such as allocating, for example, a coffee shop for women. He also addressed the endeavor to feminize education in Qalqilya governorate at specific stages, he said, “unfortunately, masculinity has begun to return in a civilized way, and we are dealing with it as a kind of civilization and progress, girls work alone, and a coffee shop for women, and this feeds patterns of masculinity further over time.”

In Bethlehem, a woman works on a taxi and two other women deliver orders, and despite the community’s reaction and rejection of such works, they did not step back. The community in Bethlehem governorate differs from cities to villages, and it is socially unacceptable to see a man working at home or a woman working in the labor market. For example, in the village of Al-Khader, where this trend is completely unacceptable, a female participant said, “I live in Al-Khader where it is fully unacceptable for women to work in such jobs and it creates psychological and moral harm to men who will be characterized by sheep or controlled by their wives. But in Beit Jala or in more civilized areas, it is normal that the woman works and the man stays at home, although it is not that much acceptable.” In Beit Sahour a group of women opened a coffee shop with Shisha smoking exclusively for women, but it failed and was replaced with a coffee shop for men.

In Hebron, women started to work in clothing stores and established **the carpentry house project**, the first of its kind in Hebron governorate. The establishment of this project was a challenge for all difficulties and impediments that identify women’s work in general. Despite of its being a new experience, it had an imprint full of achievements by women believing in work to improve their families’ income. The project aimed to consolidate women participation in the public, social, economic, and cultural life. Another achievement is the establishment of an Educational Games Cooperative, as a non-traditional model cooperative for women in the Hebron Governorate, specifically in the Old City, in order to enhance the resilience of women in that area. 30 trainees from 6 villages participated in this project to turn women’s demands into

action on the ground, activate their roles inside their families and strengthen their participation in their communities at all levels. But at the end of the day, most of the participants pointed out the importance of women persistence and continuation in the professions they chose and not to step back due to any negative reactions toward women in untraditional jobs.

Often men are not punished or stigmatized by society, for violating societal rules and norms, as is usually done with women, because it is believed that stereotypes surround women only and often the norms, stereotypes and societal rules that women are expected to follow in society are discussed. But this does not mean that men are not stigmatized by society if they violate societal norms and rules. A number of participants indicated that the society is displeased with men who do not work while their wives are the family providers. Such men are stigmatized for staying at home as females or that they are not men. “The society viewed Ahmed, who worked at home in the place of his wife, as not a man, ... because he depends on his wife and stays at home for 24 hours.” **Or they describe the husband with a car mattress, or the one who is governed and controlled by his wife, said one of the participants from Tulkarem,** “The society’s reaction toward the husband who works instead of his wife doing house chores because she works outside home, belittles his manhood, and is called his wife’s sheep.” **Or society may look with astonishment as a female participant expressed,** “my husband was putting the laundry on the clothesline in the balcony, the neighbor’s girls 6 and 7 years old were looking with astonishment and laughing at my husband because such job is woman’s and they are not used to see a man doing it.” **Another woman mentioned her experience with her little daughter when she saw her father cleaning dishes,** “Once I was in a hurry to go to the court and when my daughter saw her father cleaning dishes she said “my father has become my mother”, This is attributed to the children's observation of the roles of mother and father in the home, and the traditional images of the roles of mother and father that are imprinted in the minds of children.”

Sometimes a group of young people or friends set rules that control the behavior and conducts of the group, and everyone within the group must be aware, attentive and abide by the rules. If the group finds any of the group members has acted contrary to what is customary among the group, the member will be subjected to bullying and mocking from the rest of the group. For example, wearing of a kitchen apron by any young man from the group is considered as breaking of the rules. They associate women's aprons (with home care work) such as washing and cooking. One of the female participants said, “During Corona epidemic curfew and the spread of bullying posts on Facebook, male youth started posting each other on FB as wearing kitchen aprons, cooking, doing domestic chores, etc. Had it been natural that males do such chores, we wouldn’t have seen such posts.”

8. Strategies of Change

At the Level of Laws:

- Review and amend the Labor Law from gender perspective to have more justice, equality and be more responsive to women's rights; ensure the inclusion of women working in domestic care work, unpaid agricultural workers, domestic servants, and female workers in the informal sector within the Labor Law provisions. Moreover, home care work should be considered as a real work, and women who work within the family business should receive financial compensation for their work. The law should be amended regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, the need to harmonize the law with international conventions related to decent work, and the elimination of gender discrimination regarding professions that women cannot work in... etc.
- Demand the amendment and approval of the Social Security Law from a gender perspective, in order to have a text free of discrimination against women that ensures the provision of social protection for women, in relation with the old-age salary or pension, and other rights, especially for women who do domestic care works.

At the Level of Policies:

- The state should develop the social protection, economic and employment policies to become more responsive for women issues and rights in addition to taking necessary measures to empower women practice their right to work through positive discrimination and changing motherhood concepts to include both sexes, approve paternity leave and open nurseries in work places, etc.
- Adopt policies and measures that increase market capacity to involve women employment, especially in the private sector.
- The state must develop and follow procedural policies to work on reducing women work hours in domestic care works through the provision of nurseries and forcing governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to implement the same policy as has taken place in Jordan.
- Launch lobby and advocacy campaigns on decision makers to amend laws and policies to become more equitable and equal between males and females in relation to work and develop mechanisms, regulations, strategies and interventions for their implementation.
- Participants revealed that many husbands forcibly take over their wives' salaries and any property bought is registered in the name of the man alone. These acts contradict with divine justice and with women's rights according to Sharia, which gave the woman the right to behave and control her salary. Therefore, this requires amendment of laws to allow the registration of property purchased after marriage equally in the name of man and woman, especially if the woman works in the labor market. Moreover, property should be divided equally in the event of divorce because it has been bought from the income of both the spouses and not from the husband's money alone.

At the Societal/Local Level

- Encourage self and individual empowerment of women and at the group level (empower women in unions and cooperative work) to raise their voice and demand the amendment of the Labor Law from gender perspective to become more responsive to women's rights in workplaces whether at home or outside home in addition to uplift women's confidence in themselves and increase their self-esteem.
- Hold regular meetings and seminars for men and women to change the masculinity contents of concepts and societal stereotypes about domestic care works and women's work in the labor market.
- Educate family members on cooperative and participatory concepts and values, and that domestic care work is a shared work and responsibility of all family members equally. Also, raise husbands' awareness about the concepts of equality and non-discrimination between the sexes since childhood, due to the importance of this period in raising the children.

At the Institutional Level

- Work with socialization/social upbringing institutions (family, school, worship houses, media) to change and break stereotypes about the role of men and women in society.
- Work with the governmental institutions and workers' unions to discuss the possibility of providing unemployment salaries for unemployed youth and raise the minimum wages in Palestine. Also to discuss mechanisms for activating government monitoring and accountability on the implementation of the Labor Law and minimum wages.
- Raise women awareness about their economic rights and financial independence, specifically in relation with their financial rights and liabilities, "Every being with legal personality must have a financial liability."
- Lobbying the relevant government bodies to include domestic care works within the concept of labor, and the value of these works within the national accounts. Also to form a committee consisting of the PCBS and official and non-official institutions, in order to study the methodology and mechanism for calculating the value of domestic care work.
- Raise awareness of teachers and students (males and females) and educate them on gender roles and monitor stereotypes on roles of men and women in curricula.
- Work to improve demand on women employment in the different productive sectors, specifically in communication and technology.
- Form a committee of the three relevant sectors (private, government and non-government sectors) to discuss the reality of demand and supply of each of education institutions and labor market and how to link the skills and education of women, whether university or vocational education, to the needs and requirements of the labor market.
- Work with the Ministry of Education to amend the stereotypes about the roles of men and women in curricula and to follow a policy motivating females to enroll in vocational training, specifically in specializations that are traditionally exclusive to men.

- Raise the level of interest of media to address and discuss women's issues, and break the barriers of social taboos, which put many limits and barriers on dealing with these issues, and involving of both women and men in these discussions. Additionally, showing different images and models of women in media, especially the positive role models of women's participation.
- Work with the Ministry of Al-Awqaf to develop a moderate enlightened and non-strict religious discourse toward women issues.

Annex 1

Qualitative Tool: (Hands of Time Story)

Maryam and Ahmed are a young Palestinian couple living in a refugee camp in Lebanon, and they are parents of a one-and-a-half-year-old girl, Hind. Ahmad, who lost his job in wedding arrangement as a result of the Corona pandemic and shares his wife in domestic care work is considered an exceptional person, in a society that views men who share domestic work and care as a sign of weakness.

Mariam's father died when she was 12 years old and she was raised in her uncle's home. Insisting to complete her study, she would walk three hours daily to reach her university until she graduated with B.S. in civil engineering. But, as the Lebanese laws do not allow the Palestinian refugees to work in engineering, the family lived in difficult financial conditions, especially with the spread of Covid epidemic in Lebanon and her husband's loss of his job. Mariam decided to obtain a training certificate in digital marketing and a driver's license as well. One day, while she was looking at job advertisements in the newspapers, an advertisement for a job as a "driver or delivery driver" with an electronic marketing company with a good salary attracted her attention. According to the conditions of the job, the person who will fill the position must hold a driver's license, to transfer requests from the company to customers in their homes. Mariam applied for the job and got it. This job required her to work at night and for long hours outside home and to move between different cities in Lebanon.

At the beginning, the husband rejected the idea on the grounds that it was an unsuitable profession for his wife, who holds a civil engineering degree, and that they live in an environment that considers such works unsuitable for women. After days of intense discussion and disagreement between the spouses, and under the difficult economic conditions and lack of other options, the husband agreed to the idea and Mariam applied for the job and got it. During that period, the husband was unemployed because all his experiences were in the field of weddings arrangement. Thus, the husband remained home taking care of their daughter and his parents (80 years old) as he was living with them in their home. The grandmother sometimes helped Ahmad in caring for Hind and in some house chores.

In this context, the husband said that the circumstances made him share his wife the responsibility for the domestic chores and caring for their daughter, but he also felt that that was his responsibility as well, adding that he doesn't believe that women's responsibility is limited to domestic care work only. Ahmad added, "An idea popped into my head to calculate the working hours that I do at home during the day, and I found myself working more than 15 hours per day. I was working and spinning as a clock turning without stopping. I had feelings of happiness and tiredness at the same time. Nonetheless, what hurt me is that I used to get money for working outside the house for 8 hours, and now I get nothing, and no one outside the walls of the house appreciates the value of my work."

Mariam appreciated what her husband had done, sharing in the care of their daughter, and considered that her husband's participation in childcare and housework allowed her to work, and

that her job was very important to her, not only for the financial security it provides for the family, but also because it gave her financial independence.

Annex 2

Detailed questions asked to participants in focus groups and workshops:

1. What's the nature of relation between men and women in the Palestinian society?
2. Does division of gender roles exist in society? What's the nature of this division?
3. Do the society members believe in the current division of roles between men and women?
4. Who is responsible for the domestic and care works?
5. Do husbands share their wives domestic and care works?
6. What are the reasons and backgrounds of this division of roles in society?
7. Does the society and participants view domestic and care works as real businesses, comparable in value to other jobs in the labor market?
8. Can the value of domestic care works be calculated and included in the national accounts?
9. To what extent husbands appreciate their wives' domestic care works?
10. What are the means and ways to compensate and reward women for the domestic care work they do?
11. What's the role of the state in compensating women for their role in the domestic care works and provision of social protection for them?
12. Do women have the right to work outside home in the labor market?
13. What are the reasons or source of division of professions between males and females in the labor market? What are the societal stereotypes of depriving women of working in some professions?
14. Do women have control over their salaries for working in the labor market?
15. What is the role of labor unions and state in protecting male and female workers' rights in the labor market from discrimination against them and their exploitation by employers?